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THE SPACE GAMER

THE MAGAZINE OF ADVENTURE GAMING

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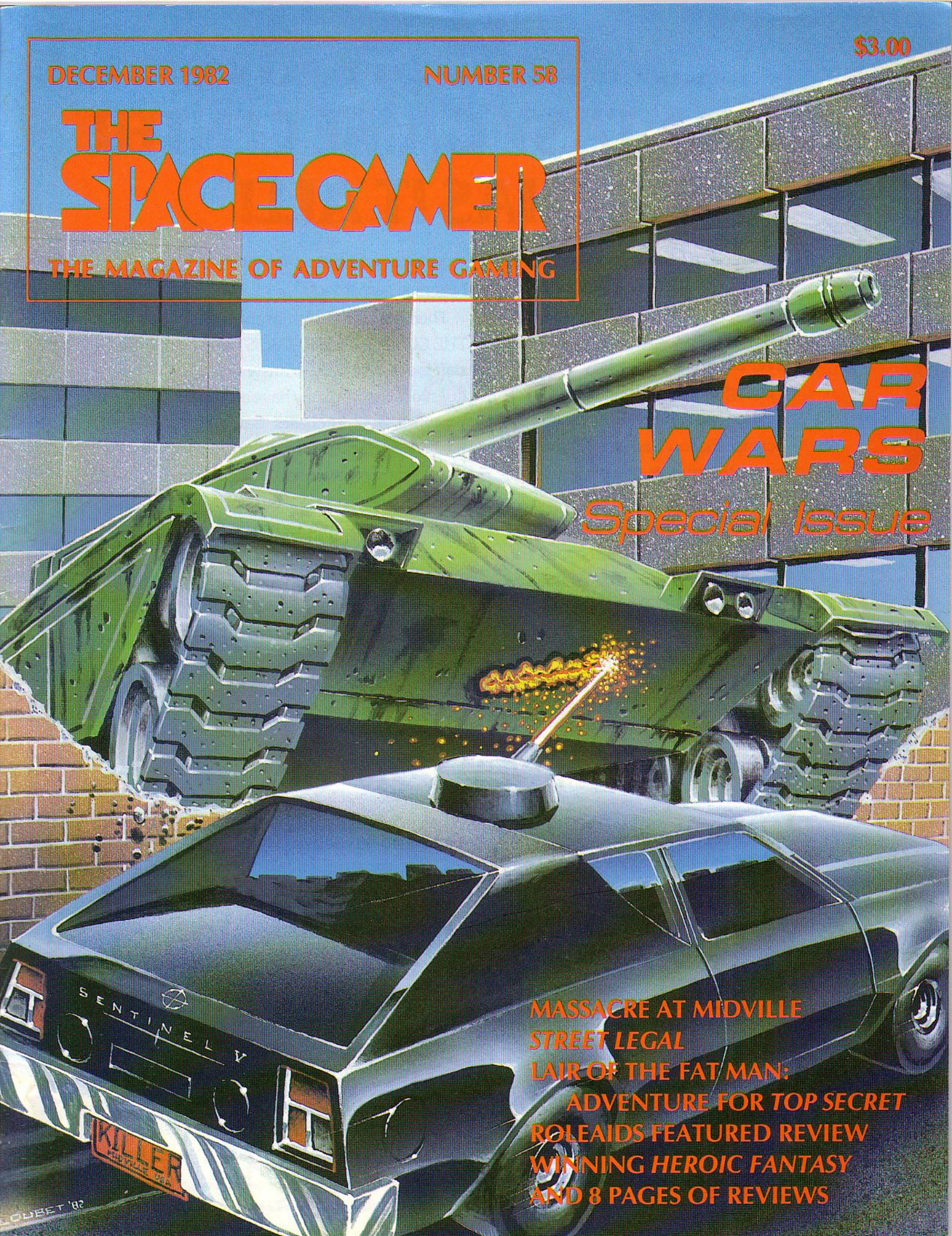

CAR WARS

Special Issue

MASSACRE AT MIDVILLE
STREET LEGAL
LAIR OF THE FAT MAN:
ADVENTURE FOR *TOP SECRET*
ROLEAIDS FEATURED REVIEW
WINNING *HEROIC FANTASY*
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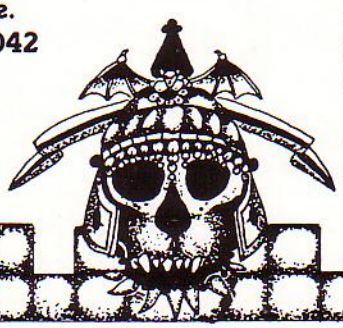

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THE SPACE GAMER

NUMBER 58 – DECEMBER, 1982

Welcome to the largest *Space Gamer* ever.

Actually, purists can argue that issue 26 was the same size – 56 pages self-cover – but 16 of those pages were a catalogue. We're glad to be able to offer the increased coverage, and it looks as though we'll be able to do it again in the near future.

This is a special *Car Wars* issue, by popular demand . . . Included are "Massacre at Midville" (anyone who can't figure out the subject matter from the cover painting needs to go back to bed), and "Street Legal," an ingenious piece of autoduelling fiction, with its own accompanying article. Our centerpiece, though, is "Lair of the Fat Man" (*Top Secret* adventure in the grand tradition of, well, somebody).

And everyone be sure to check out "Where We're Going" this issue – there's a lot coming down the line you'll want to know about.

– Aaron Allston

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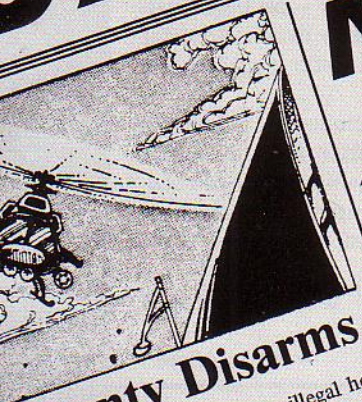


County Disarms

h, NY (AP) – Moving to avert illegal hos-
tween two local autoduel societies, the
riving Safety Enforcement League yesterday
Stone County, NY to be a non-duelling zone.
l Gulch authorities, alarmed at recent out-
of duellist violence, contacted EDSEL officials
ays ago. EDSEL enforcement patrolmen were
diately moved into the city, quickly setting up
nsive fortifications and publicizing the call for
ilitarization. The Floral Gulch Autoduelling
iety immediately disarmed in accordance with the
w regulations.

However, the Amoco Kids, an autoduelling gang
om nearby Stone City, ignored EDSEL regulations
d arrived in Floral Gulch in armed cars midday
esterday. The Amocos attacked Gulch Autoduel
ociety vehicles immediately upon arrival, on State
oad 3

ofessional defensive driving techniques,
uellists were able to elude the Amocos
forcers could intervene. EDSEL forces
tone City duellists; one EDSEL heli-
in a freak accident during the brief
nforcement officers were killed or

rity Guard tests Taxes

nch building of the Internal Revenue
oyed late yesterday when John M.
ville City Hall security guard, went
ooting spree with one of the hall's
cket launcher bunkers.
l to police after the incident; he
mment to the press. Co-workers
been recently incensed by a 23%
stic energy tax, which may have
spree. "I knew something was
d up his statement mailing this
of the building screaming 'Kill,
orker Mark V. Ogre, 28.
building has been estimated at
s office has refused to comment

MASSACRE AT MIDVILLE

by Chris Smith

It had been six months since the brutal clashes between the citizens of Midville and the notorious Crusaders cycle gang; since then, Midville's reputation as the toughest unfortified town around had kept most other cycle gangs from the area. Coverage of that small war had drawn attention to the town, and the federal government, anxious to cash in on anything that would bolster its public image, magnanimously re-established the area's long-abandoned army base. The base's equipment and the area's reputation would keep troublemakers away from the base until all its defensive capabilities were repaired.

That was the theory, at least. But no one told the Anarchist Relief Front.

The ARFs were a crack terrorist team devoted to continuing the collapse of the federal government. Skilled at infiltration, combat, and utilization of the press to further their own ends, they could not resist the challenge of Midville's reputation and the government's interest in that area.

And so, one clear night, a team of ARFs stealthily made its way into the army base, dropped fragmentation and smoke grenades to keep the personnel busy, and noisily made off with the base's prized possession, an experimental tank – the *Dempsey* XM-6.

Phone calls immediately went out to the Midville officials. The base was a mere twenty miles away; the townspeople had on the order of twenty-five minutes to get out of town before the tank rolled in – hardly enough time, and there were simply not enough vehicles to effect a mass evacuation. So the town's defenders gathered on the south side of town, hoping to stop the tank in its (ahem) tracks, while the nonvehicular townspeople were removed as far north as was convenient, to the city mall.

And the ARFs knew they'd driven into a hornet's nest when they topped the final hill on the approach to the town and saw the unmistakable smoke trails of rockets and LAWs streaking toward them . . .

The *Dempsey* XM-6

The experimental heavy tank was a step forward in the art of vehicular warfare. It was protected with enough armor to stop approximately five shots from its own main gun, which was one of the most effective in existence. It was only capable of 60 mph, but could sustain that speed over most terrains.

Basic notes on the new components for the tank are:

Tank Body. $5,000. 5,000 lbs. Max. load 16,000 lbs. 45 spaces. Armor cost/weight $80/37 lbs per point.

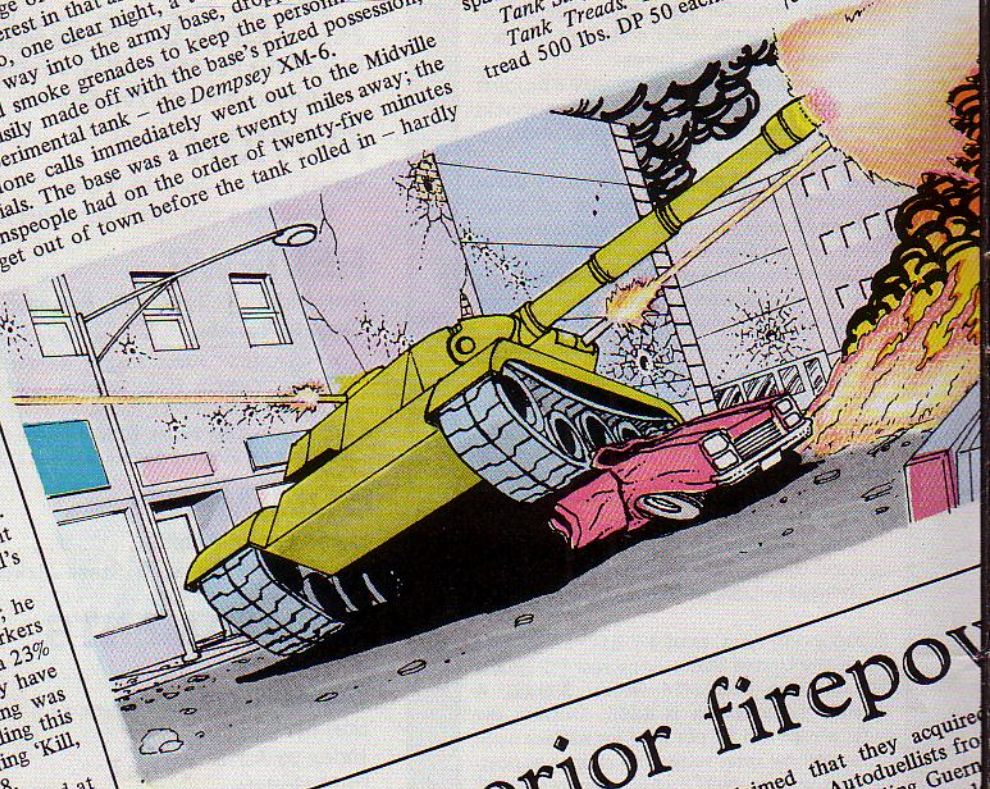
Tank Chassis. Adds 210% to weight capacity. Costs 1000% of tank body cost.

Tank Power Plant. Costs $20,000. 5,000 lbs. 20 spaces. 40 DP. 15,500 power factors. Max. speed 60 mph.

Tank Suspension. Price is 200% of body cost. HC 5.

Tank Treads. Price per tread $5,000. Weight per tread 500 lbs. DP 50 each. A tank requires two treads.

(continued on page 4)



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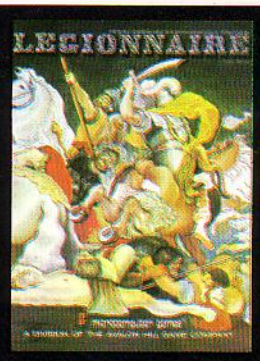
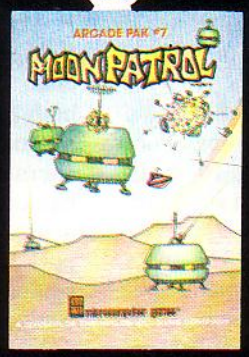
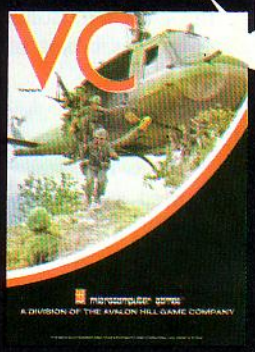
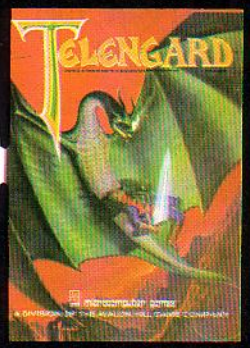
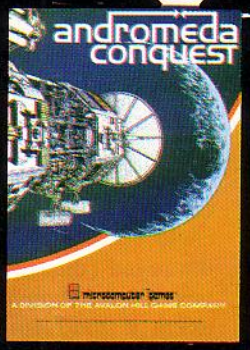


RISING STARS









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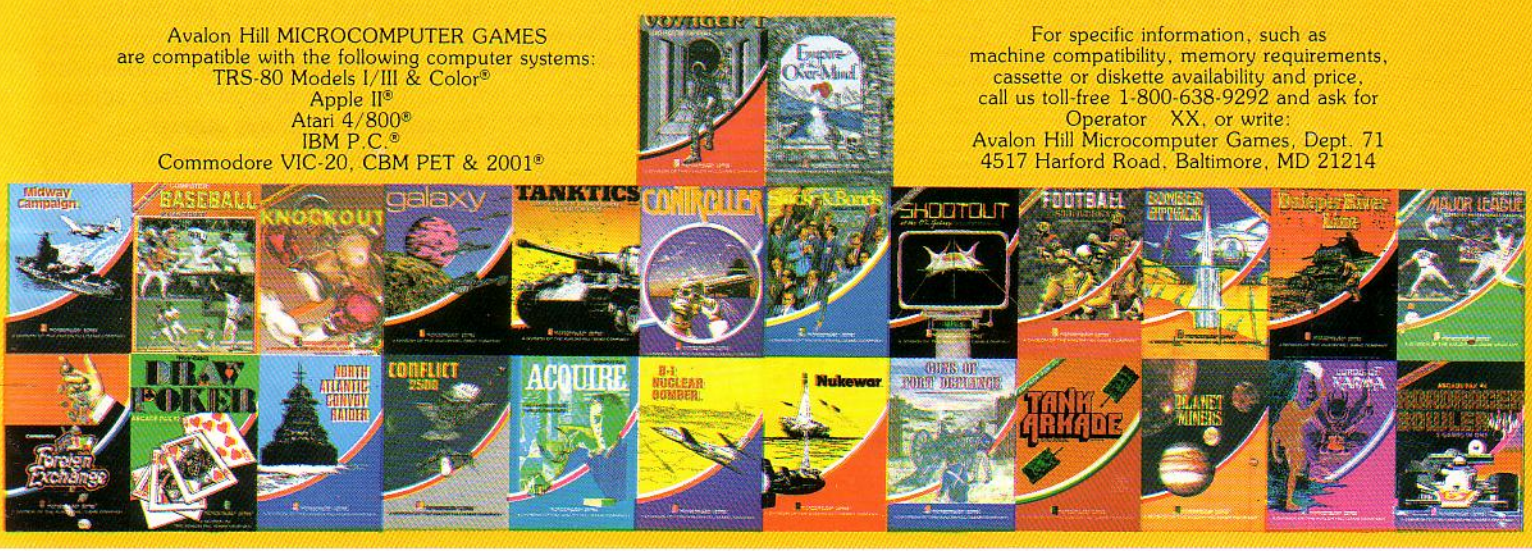


Tank Turret. Costs $8,000. Weighs 1,000 lbs. Holds 25 spaces. Requires 5 spaces from the tank body capacity for the turning mechanism. Armor $40/20 lbs per point.

Tank Main Gun. To Hit 7. Damage *6 dice.* DP 10. Weight 1,200 lbs. Price $10,000. Requires 10 spaces. 10 shots. CPS $100. WPS 20 lbs. A main gun extra magazine holds 10 shots; the *Dempsey* carries four extra magazines. The main gun may *not* be put on automatic fire.

Extra equipment includes one communications center as per ***Sunday Drivers'*** killer RV ($2,000, 100 lbs, 1 space, 2DP) and four hi-res targeting computers (two in main body, two in turret).

The first thing to remember while gaming the tank is that it is essentially two vehicles, one atop the other. Each could operate if the other were gutted or destroyed (though the turret would lose power to its computers and turning mechanism if the main body were wrecked). It's hard to kill. It's extremely hard to slow down, as it can roll right over rubble and enemy cars. And its main gun packs quite a punch – enough to penetrate the average car's armor, on a good roll, with one shot. The force opposing it needs all the help it can get.

The Crew

The *Dempsey* carries a crew of six: One commander (who also operates the radio equipment), one driver, two main body gunners (on the RRs), and two turret gunners (one on the main gun and one alternating between the RR and machine gun). There are five extra spaces in the main body, which can be used to transport troops or carry the crew's personal equipment and such things as boxes of equipment, prisoners, etc.

How It Fires

The tank's front-mounted main body recoilless rifles fire normally, in the normal arcs for their placement. It's the turret that's a trifle odd.

The turret guns fire in the normal arc for forward-mounted guns, but the turret's facing may change once per turn. At the end of Phase 10, after all automatic-firing weapons have gone off, the turret may change its facing by up to 45° in either direction. The turret main gun fires once *every other* turn, half as fast as normal vehicular weapons. The turret is articulated enough that one can't be safe under the "fire umbrella" unless he's on top of the tank, either on the turret or the main body top armor; and if he is on the body top armor, the turret RR can get him anyway. (Persons on top of the turret would have to be removed by MG fire from the small turret, if the tank operators cared to deal with them at all.)

The main gun is especially nasty. Not only does it do more damage than any other ***Car Wars*** weapon, but it has a lethal burst radius: a 2" radius with 3 dice of fragmentation effect (which affects even buildings and vehicular armor at full power). Close groupings of opponents are welcome targets.

How to Shoot It

On the other hand, this machine is easy to hit. It's +3 from above, +2 from the side (-1 if targeting treads from side, for cumulative +1), +1 for front or rear (-2 if targeting treads from the front, for cumulative -1), unmodified for turret side, -1 targeting turret from front or back.

The main barrel can be targeted from the side or above at a -2, from the front at -4. If it is hit, the barrel is presumed to be protected by the turret front armor.

Crushing and Ramming

The tank is equipped to roll over rough terrain, through buildings, and across enemy troops. It's designed for squashing things. Due to the slope of the front armor, it takes only 1/3 damage from any ram attack from the front, or when ramming something else front-on. If it rams its way into a building and collapses it, rubble damage amounts to only 1d6 each to top armor and top turret armor. It can roll across rubble areas, taking 1d6-4 to each tread unit per turn in rubble.

Due to its great mass, the tank does increased damage to braced or planted objects (buildings, well-braced barricades, chains, etc.). Treat any ram attack against such an object as if the tank were moving 20 mph faster. (This only refers to damage dealt, not received; roll damage dice at the tank's actual speed for damage taken by the tank.) When a tank crashes through a wall, it creates *two* adjacent "breaches," as it moves through.

When the tank attempts to crush a vehicle, it must roll forward onto it. Initial impact of the tread rolling onto a vehicle (or pedestrian) does 3 dice. Each subsequent turn the tank keeps a tread atop a car, the vehicle takes 4 more dice damage. For damage allocation purposes, treat this as a shot from the direction the tank was moving when it hit. A vehicle may not move when a tank is atop it (surprise!).

TANK PLANNING SHEET

VEHICLE PLANNING SHEET
Dempsey Body

Vehicle Wt. Capacity: 49,600 lbs. Acceleration: 2.5 mph. HC: 5. Total $: 153,500 + Turret

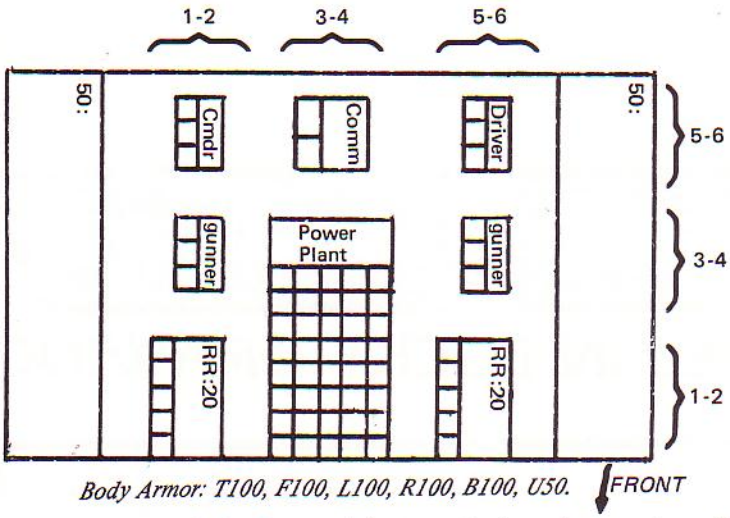
Item	Cost	Wt.	Spaces	Total Wt.	Spaces Left	Notes
Body Size	5,000	5,000		5,000	45	Tank
Chassis Str.	50,000					Tank
Power Plant	20,000	5,000	20	10,000	25	speed: 60 mph
Suspension	10,000					HC: 5
Tires	10,000	1,000		11,000		Treads x 2
Driver		150	2	11,150	23	
Gunner x 3		450	6	11,600	17	
Weapon	3,000	600	4	12,200	13	RR x 2
Ammo	1,400	200		12,900		Load x 4
Weapon						
Ammo						
Weapon						
Ammo						
Weapon						
Ammo						
Weapon						
Ammo						
Accessory	8,000	–	–	12,900	13	Hi-res x 2
Accessory	100	30	2	12,930	11	Magazine x 2
Accessory	see turret	see turret	5	see turret	6	Turret Equip.
Accessory	2,000	100	1	12,530	5	Comm Ctr
Armor	44,000	20,350		32,880		550 @ 80/37
Totals	153,500 + Turret			32,880 + Turret	5	

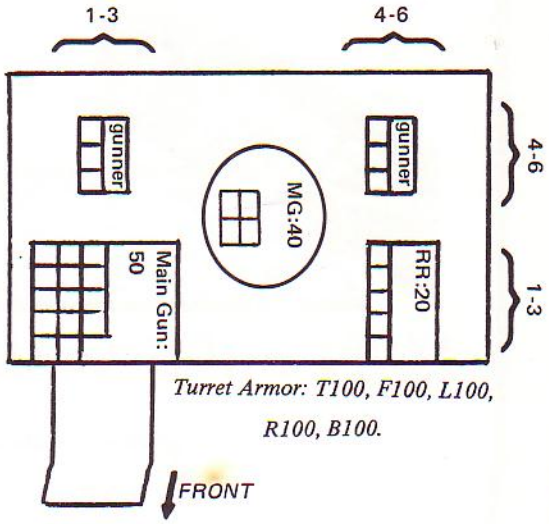
VEHICLE PLANNING SHEET
Dempsey Turret

Vehicle Wt. Capacity: Acceleration: HC: Total $: 57,000 + body

Item	Cost	Wt.	Spaces	Total Wt.	Spaces Left	Notes
Body Size	8,000	1,000		1,000	25	Tank Turret
Chassis Str.	–					–
Power Plant	–	–	–	–	–	–
Suspension	–					HC: –
Tires	–	–		–		–
~~Driver~~		~~150~~	~~2~~	–	–	–
Gunner x 2		300	4	1,300	21	
Weapon	10,000	1,200	10	2,500	11	Main Gun
Ammo	5,000	1,000		3,500		Load x 5
Weapon	1,500	300	2	3,800	9	RR
Ammo	700	100		3,900		Load x 2
Weapon	1,000	150	1	4,050	8	MG
Ammo	1,000	100		4,150		Load x 2
Weapon						
Ammo						
Weapon						
Ammo						
Accessory	8,000	–	–	4,150	8	Hi-res x 2
Accessory	1,500	200	–	4,250	8	Turret
Accessory	300	90	6	4,340	2	Magazine x 2
Accessory						
Armor	20,000	10,000		14,340		500 x 40/20
Totals	57,000			14,340 + body	2	

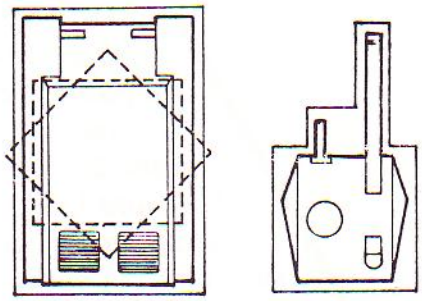
TANK VEHICLE RECORD SHEET





The vehicle record sheet for the *Dempsey* is in two parts, above, for convenience; the vehicle operates as two semiautonomous units in combat. Also shown above are a sequence of brackets with associated numbers. This is simply a convenient way to figure where damage goes. If, for example, the *Dempsey*'s left body armor is penetrated, roll 1d6 to see where the damage goes. On a 5, for example, it would first hit the driver, then continue on to the communications center, then through the commander and into the right armor. A frontal hit penetrating the turret armor, on a roll of 2, would damage the main gun; if it penetrated, it woud then go on to the gunner.

Also shown is the counter for the *Dempsey*. (On the mailer cover this issue is an extra counter, for convenience.) The counter, as with the record sheet, is in two parts; the turret is placed on the gridded section of the main body counter. The directional lines are shown to indicate standard facings, in 45° increments. You can photocopy the counter from this page or simply cut out the one provided on the mailer cover.



Pedestrians and the Tank

It's folly for a foot soldier to be anywhere near this juggernaut – the proper way for a pedestrian to deal with the tank is to be far away or to stay hidden and fire LAWs. It is indeed possible for some maniac to jump atop a tank or elude crushing by ducking under and between its treads, but not likely. The standard "two dice and pray" method from ***Sunday Drivers*** should suffice here.

If any members of the tank crew should wish to play pedestrian, there are three access hatches into the tank (all lockable from the inside): one exiting the tank turret, one exiting the main body top (over the power plant), and one full-sized door hatch out the main body rear center.

The tank also sports quick-open ports for small-arms fire: two on each side of the main body and tank turret. It's not generally efficient to fire a .45 out a port when there's a recoilless rifle handy, but the ports are handy for dropping grenades.

Charts and Tables

The charts and other diagrams presented for this little adventure are on pages 4 and 5. Included are vehicle planning sheets for the tank, vehicle record sheets, and targeting and damage allocation sheets (which show a method of distributing damage when the tank is breached from specific directions), one each for the main body and for the turret.

Also included is the counter for the tank – simply photocopy and cut out. When playing with the tank, take extreme care to keep the turret centered on the tank body, since they are separate pieces.

New Pedestrian Equipment

One new item of equipment is introduced for the hapless pedestrians: the Smoke Grenade. This handy little item looks pretty much like any other grenade, and operates the same way, with an identical timing system. But when it goes off, it produces two smoke clouds (position so that the grenade would have been at their center, as shown below). The smoke clouds behave just as those from vehicular ejectors. Smoke grenades cost $50 each; base roll to hit is 9.

Scenarios

One: Basic Scenario. The tank enters from the south side of the map, along any southern access the tank player chooses.

Many of the town's civilians have been removed to the mall for safekeeping. The ARFs, who've been monitoring MONDO civil broadcasts, know this. Their objective is to get to the mall and knock down any four mall buildings. Having accomplished this objective, the tank can leave the map in any direction, and it has won.

The townsfolks' objective is, simply enough, to stop the tank before it can reach the mall. This doesn't mean just knocking out one or both of its treads and letting it sit: given time, the tank can knock down buildings and get a line of sight to the mall from practically anywhere on the map.

The ARFs get the tank and $3,500 in personal gear (for the entire crew, not per man). The townsfolk get $150,000 and as many people as the town player wants and can equip usefully (appropriating 400 unarmed people to climb atop the tank and try to collapse its suspension would be an asinine ploy – any such attempts should be rewarded with slightly altered victory conditions: Each 15 "throwaway" pedestrians should be worth one mall building when computing victory).

The townspeople may set up anywhere they wish on the Midville map from ***Sunday Drivers,*** but may not arrange any of the peculiar traps and tricks they could

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in that adventure – there's simply not enough time. The tank player may enter anywhere on the south edge of the map, including through a building. (But if it is through a building, the tank player must tell the town player which one it's in. Also, if the tank starts in a building, give it 1d6 to top armor, top turret armor, and to each tread in damage.) All vehicles may start Turn 1 at any speed (within the scope of the rules) they desire.

Two: Tank Duel. Here, the hapless civilians of the town have scattered to the four winds (mostly to the western field region), except for a few hardy souls. Those few have received a coded transmission from the army base: "Engage and delay hostiles – assistance *en route.*" The ARFs did indeed take the experimental tank, but couldn't make off with the base's other heavy units, two old, reliable *Roosevelt* VIIs. The *Roosevelt* is similar to the *Dempsey,* but only has 75 pts of armor per side (50 on bottom); its main gun only does 4 dice damage, with a 2" 2-die burst, and it has no main-body guns. Consequently, it has two fewer gunners in the main body. Otherwise, it's pretty similar to the *Dempsey.*

Here, the ARFs get the *Dempsey,* as before. They set up first, anywhere within 8" of Second and Oak. The townsfolk set up next, their units being anywhere on the map out of immediate LOS (line of sight) of the tank (they're just about to spring their ambush); they get $5,000 and, again, as many people as they want to reasonably equip. The *Roosevelt* VIIs set up last, entering anywhere along the south edge of the map, as the *Dempsey* did in Scenario One.

The ARF's objective here is to wreck or immobilize the *Roosevelts* and escape off the west edge of the map (just up and leaving would merely result in a running battle, and the *Roosevelts* would probably have the advantage, if both are operating). As before, the townspeople's task is to stop and stomp the stolen tank.

Campaigning Notes

The prices given for tank components reflect the cost to the U.S. government, dealing direct with contracted corporations. The unusual components are not available to standard autoduellists. In a campaigning setting, duellists could try to steal one – becoming very similar to the ARFs in the process – or to negotiate with the elite black market or foreign arms suppliers. If a referee ever chooses to give normal duellists a chance at acquiring a tank, multiply costs of all unusual equipment by 250% . . .

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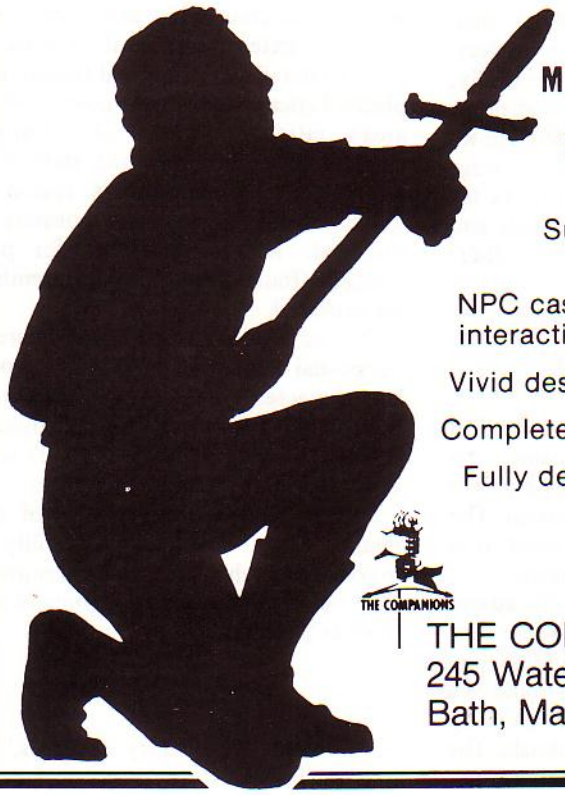

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Featured Review by Kelly Grimes and Aaron Allston

At Origins '82, Mayfair Games, which had until then been noted mainly for its line of minigames and ***War in the Falklands,*** introduced its new line of role-playing adventures and campaign supplements. The line is called RoleAids, and it isn't a misnomer; most of the titles are characterized by a great deal of thought, attention to detail, and usefulness, and can indeed provide relief to the harried gamemaster.

The line currently consists of three adventure modules (***Fez I: The Valley of Trees, Beastmaker Mountain,*** and ***Nanorien Stones***) and one campaign setting (***Dwarves***). The three adventures are in booklet format and are sold in slick pocketed folders; ***Dwarves*** is a perfect-bound 8½" x 11" paperback. Physically, all four are characterized by good printing quality and typesetting, adequate-to-good layout and formatting, average maps, and mediocre art; the folders for the adventures seem sturdy enough and are an innovative touch. All are for ***D&D*** or ***AD&D.***

Beastmaker Mountain

This adventure was designed by Bill Fawcett, Mayfair's primary "name" designer and (if rumor holds true) a player in the original Blackmoor campaign. The adventure is suitable as a single game or as an addition to an existing campaign.

The player-characters begin the adventure in a half-deserted village, where they learn of Beastmaker Mountain, an ominous place which was once the home of a now-vanished magic-user whose specialty was the creation of strange animals. The magic-user has vanished, his wife has left to search for him, and the beasts are still there – even more so than before: The wizard's wife, before she left, cursed the mountain so that it has been attracting evil monsters to the area.

This is a hero's adventure: Deeds such as rescuing missing locals, killing the monsters, and ridding the valley of a renegade soldier and his outlaw gang are the goals of the adventure. Included are recommendations for the DM who needs to get reluctant characters into the mountain.

This isn't, however, a hack-'n-slash adventure of mismatched monsters, secret doors, and treasure strewn willy-nilly about a dungeon; ***Beastmaker Mountain*** was constructed with both sense and logic. An extensive amount of work has gone to detail. Monsters and treasures are placed logically and in the context of the area's rationale. A list of extraneous magic items is provided, with stats on the items *and* the magic-user's reason for making them. Some new monsters are provided. Recommendations for party strength (fourth level or higher members) are provided.

The adventure has few flaws. There are occasional outbreaks of silliness (a peculiar character name, lunatic encounters with inanimate objects), but all these do is alter the tone of the adventure somewhat and can be worked around.

All in all, the adventure is of good quality and excellent playability. It makes for a challenge and an enjoyable time, and could probably command more than its $7 price tag.

Fez I

Subtitled "The Valley of Trees," this is a tournament-style adventure for team use; while it does provide stats for the player-characters, there are modifications provided for a DM to work it into an existing campaign, and it seems more adaptable to other game systems than some such adventures.

The main objective of the adventure is the slaying of an evil dragon. To do this, the characters must fulfill several prophesies, the first of which is for them to be raised from the dead. When they are resurrected at the adventure's start, the characters all find that they have partial amnesia. Since they cannot fully count upon what they know and what they can do, the players find what would normally be a simple task turning into a very challenging one.

In the course of the adventure, the characters fulfill prophesies, follow clues, and find out who they truly are; emphasis is on thinking their way through situations rather than killing everything in sight. Intelligently-played characters will probably come through in one piece and be happy with the results.

The central character of this adventure – and the promised subsequent entries in the series – is Fez, a time-travelling wizard who studies prophesies and does his best to make them come true; in this case, by sending the player-characters on an epic quest.

The adventure is different from most modules on the market because the players are not told anything about their characters beyond their names and some scraps of their memories. The DM, of course, has the complete information on the characters, the quest, the prophesies, and so on. Detail on the adventure's background is good, but not cumbersome. Intelligent players will also be able to figure out a good deal about their characters from the initial hints, and will be able to put more pieces together to better flesh out the characters by the adventure's end.

As with ***Beastmaker Mountain,*** there are some flaws. At the adventure's end, Fez is supposed to claim four of the magic items the party has found; unfortunately, the text doesn't say which ones or whether it makes a difference in the next adventure. One castle which the characters visit was once inhabited by a wizardly practical joker; once again we get a splash of silliness. It's really too difficult an adventure for novice DMs or players. However, it's a good package, and experienced players should enjoy it.

Nanorien Stones

The premise of this adventure is a simple one: The characters are supposed to

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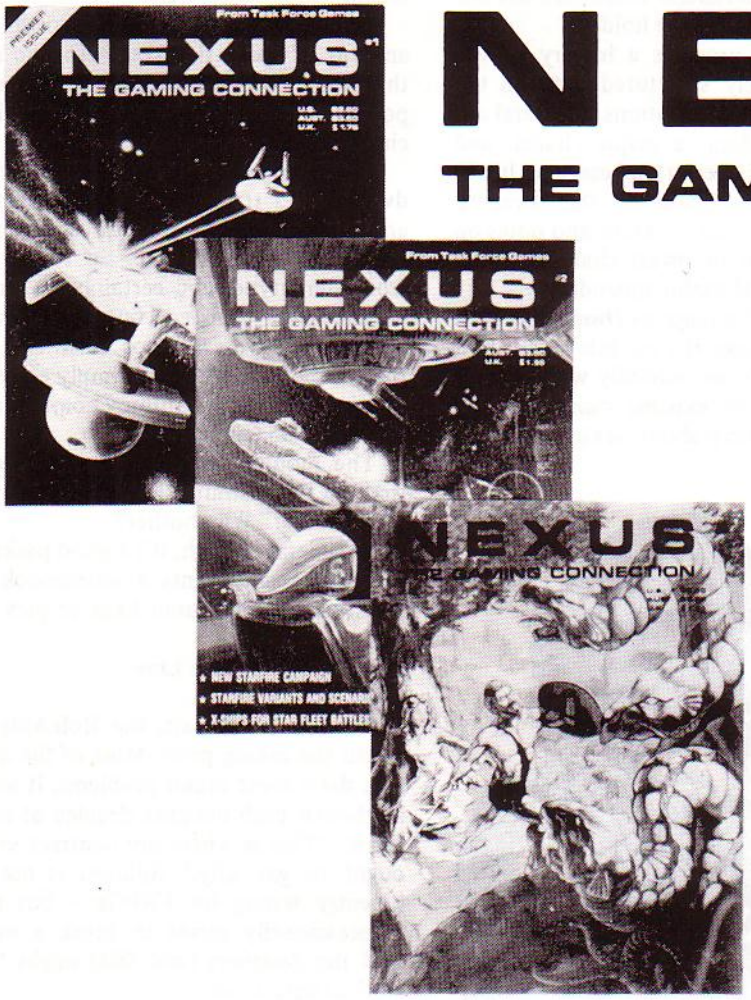

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journey to the four elemental planes in search of the magical "Nanorien Stones," retrieve them, and return to the Prime Material Plane. In reality, it's much more complicated than that.

The quest starts out with a beautiful narrative to be read to the players to set the mood and provide background. Actual play starts with the characters passing through a strange archway; once through, they begin their search on the plane of Earth. The first plane is fairly simple. However, the adventure becomes progressively harder, making it an almost certain killer adventure before it ends. And when it does end, it leaves the players hanging, returning the characters to the prime material plane with little reward for their efforts.

This adventure's flaws are many and varied. The monster encounters on the elemental planes are fairly well-defined, but there are no real recommendations as to the placement of the other treasures to be found. Some encounters seem petty and mean: If the characters take the wrong road on the plane of Fire, they walk for four days, enter the City of Brass, are taken prisoner and tortured for a week (losing half their hit points in the process), and then are transported to the temple they wanted to find in the first place – minus all equipment except their clothes and armor. It's a high punishment for taking a wrong road, and wasn't very well thought-out: If the elementals in the City of Brass hated the characters so, why would they let them go after only one week and then send them right to the place to which they wanted to go? At the very least, the adventurers would find themselves in some unsavory spot, though it would take some looking to find a spot more unsavory than this adventure. In addition, practically all of this unpleasantness is predetermined; it happens without the characters' actions making a difference.

This module isn't for everyone. In fact, it's doubtful that it's for anyone. With a great deal more work, it might be fun, but the buyer would be well-advised to leave this one sitting on the shelf.

Dwarves

The most striking thing about this campaign setting is the sheer amount of work that went into it. It required quite a lot of raw talent and energy to get this put together; trouble is, some of the talent and energy stayed raw.

Dwarves is 96 pages describing the dwarven kingdom of Ostohar, a comparatively secluded kingdom which can be dropped whole into any ***AD&D*** campaign. Unlike the three adventures, this package states on the cover that it's suitable for ***AD&D;*** a note at the bottom confirms that use of the ***AD&D*** trademark has not been sanctioned by the holder.

The book provides a history of the kingdom, nicely structured data on the kingdom (with descriptions of several cities, the kingdom, a major citadel, and other areas of interest), an essay on life in Ostohar, the religion of the dwarves, dwarven magic and artifacts, and notes on the generation of dwarf characters, and provides several useful appendices.

The big advantage to ***Dwarves*** is this: The DM can take the module and drop it whole, though undoubtedly with modifications, into an existing campaign, and not have to worry about lacking some sort

of answer to a player's question about dwarves. Composition of forces? It's there. Battlefield strategy? It's there. Gods, NPCs, artifacts, society, guild advancement, alignment tendencies, history, race relations, and more, are all at least touched on, if not dealt with in depth.

The next few paragraphs will touch on the module's faults. There are indeed a few. However, it should be remembered that these are all problems which can be worked around or ignored by a DM with experience, and the overall value of the package remains high.

Character level is a trifle high, especially for ***AD&D***. It should mean something to the reader that more space is devoted to giving the gods' combat statistics, appearances, and personalities than to the actual religions devoted to them. A number of artifacts are presented, but the places where they currently are, or the NPCs who currently belong to them, are not noted – are they lying around as treasure? In the streets?

Scenarios, except for the ones involving the citadel, are awfully sparse, usually consisting of no more than a few lines of recommendations.

The artwork is seldom worth the amount of space it takes. Also, the idea that these bearded dumplings are supposed to be dwarves is a little hard to choke down.

The civilization presented for these dwarves is a trifle odd, more frolicsome and cheerful than most pictures presented of dwarvenkind. It's no sin to deviate from stereotype, and certainly no sin to deviate from Tolkien, but it's possible that some buyers will not much care for the society presented; it's simply easier to imagine Sleepy and Grumpy coming from Ostohar than Gimli or Bombur.

The module also deals in depth with that ***D&D*** chestnut, "Do female dwarves have beards?" Why bother?

In general, though, it's a good package. If a DM really wants a sourcebook on dwarves, this is a good item to pick up.

The Line

For the most part, the RoleAids are worth the asking price. Most of the modules share some minor problems. It seems as though each designer decided at some point, "This is where my contract says I ought to get silly." Silliness is not inherently wrong for FRPGs – but here it occasionally serves to break a mood that the designers (and DM) might have worked hard to set.

However, all of these, save ***Nanorien Stones,*** are worth looking at. We're looking forward to seeing the next releases in the series.

*All of the RoleAids are adventure modules for **D&D** or **AD&D**, published by Mayfair Games in 1982.*

Beastmaker Mountain; *$7.00. Designed by William Fawcett. One 26-page rulebook with three pull-out maps, in folder cover.*

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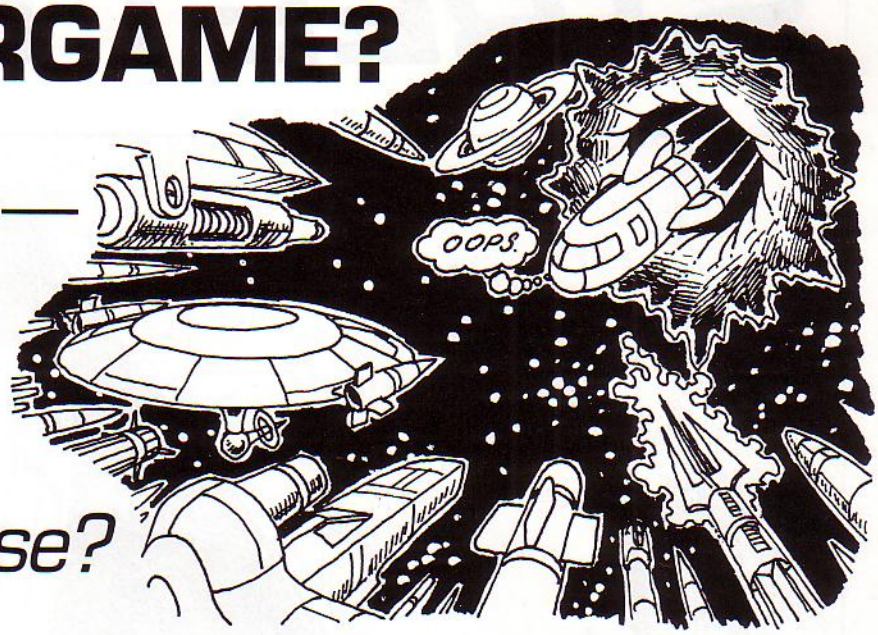

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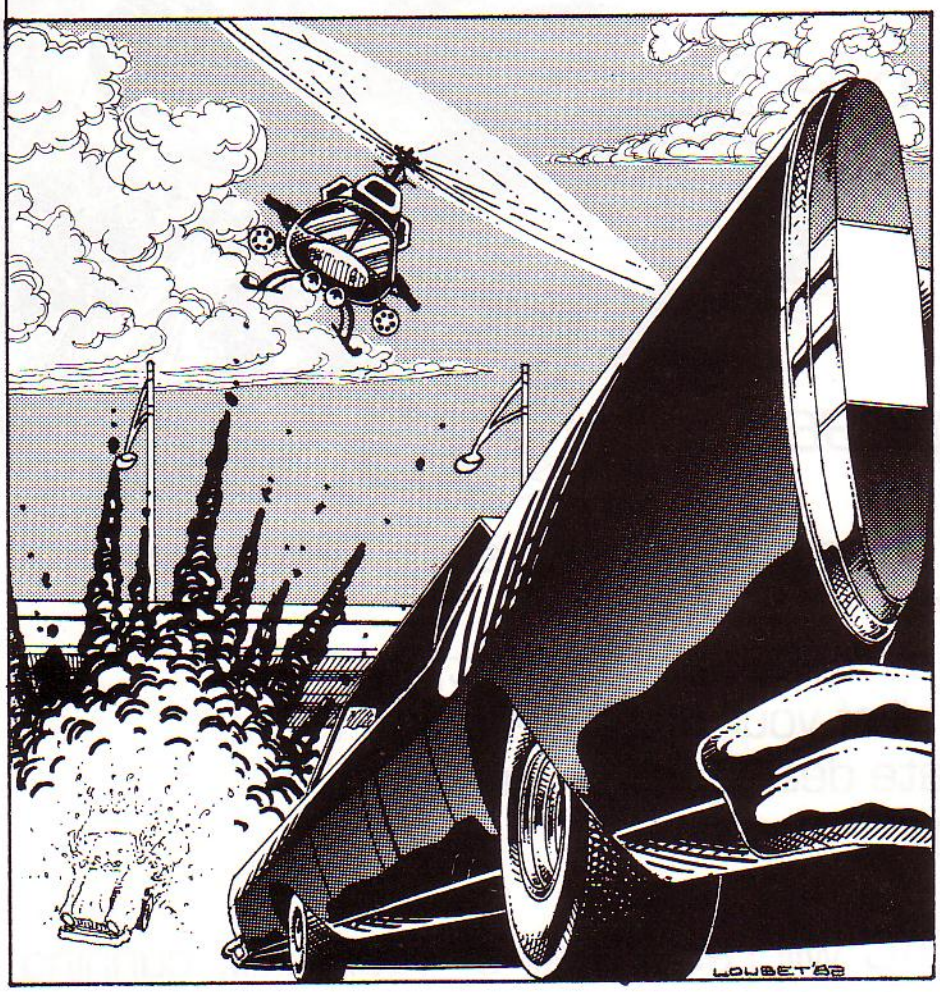


by John M. Ford

Now it is not for me to say that Zig and Benny should not have smoked three of the Amoco Kids out on State 37, for had not the Amocos sworn that said piece of public highway is their turf only, and death to all comers, and so on and so forth? I tell you truly, things have not been really right in this part of the world since the Jackson Memorial Commandos assembled their nuke beneath the dear old Brickyard.

But as I was saying, a week after Zig and Benny celebrate their victory – and you will understand what sort of drivers these two are when I tell you that they did not argue over the third kill, but painted one score each on their hulls and dedicated the third to Holy Mario – a week after this, there is a detonation and a pillar of graphite-colored smoke on the west side of town, and the unmistakable zzzap of a vehicular laser. But before anybody can react, before even the SportsTwenty-Four choppers can reach the scene, a sudden and not reassuring silence falls.

And at dusk, a black Nissan 280-Z Executioner is observed to turn the corner of Sixth and Walnut southbound to west, which is the wrong way down both one-ways, and hurl two objects out. Fortunately only pedestrians are killed in the incident. The objects are brought back to Gulch Autoduelling Society headquarters. They are the screaming eagle hood of Benny's Trans Am Turbo Bandit and the hood ornament from Zig's Mercedes 680i/Gepanzerte, and we know what this means even before Marcus the club's activity director winds on his white silk scarf.

What it means, is war. What else would it mean?

We hold a proper sort of wake for our departed comrades on wheels, with black candles on the hood of Marcus' Studebaker Avanti, and Southern Comfort and Jack Daniel's Black Label in great quantity. All present share a Coors in honor of the Holy Bandit (and Benny too) and a Revell kit of a Nissan ZEx is put in the microwave on Roast Turkey. A good time is had by all. Except Benny and Zig, of course.

Some hours after the conclusion of this event I am awakened by the ring of the telephone. Through the curtains I can see that the sky has its Cibie halogen fog-cutters on, and boy that hurts, but I am otherwise OK since I have drunk only JD no. 7 and the sacred sip of Coors, not Southern Comfort which makes me start rough, knock, and ping.

It is Marcus calling. There is something odd about his voice, though I am not sure what. He says "Chromium alert," than which there is none higher. "Be at the GAS Garage in dragstrip time." He hangs up, and I realize what sounds wrong: it is the only time I have ever heard Marcus' voice without the sound of engines behind it.

It is also creepy-quiet outside my house. Where is the roar, the grind, the squeal of cars, the merry chatter of guns, and zing of tracers? I hear a noise that is horribly like maladjusted disc brakes, but it is a bird. A for God's sake bird.

Feeling like a man whose needle is on E, I go to the garage and get into my unarmed car, a Saab Wild Weasel Turbo with a quarter-ton of electronic-warfare gear, SR-71 paint, and laser-mirrored glass.

I start the car. Instantly the Escort superhet-multinet begins to complain. I put up a locator plot and cannot believe what I see there: Either the weirdest reflection pattern in the history of microwaves has been set up or the entire town is blanketed with radar guns. X and K bands both.

I drive out very slowly. There is not another car on the road. I pass a great number of signs, reading things like AUTODUELLING PROHIBITED IN THIS SECTOR and SLOW DEMILITARIZED ZONE and WATCH YOUR RECOIL – WE ARE. Once I think a high-velocity rifle slug goes over my hood, but I do not check the Blaupunkt audio analyzer. I am a little scared to.

When I get to the Garage, all is quiet, no hums, no braaps. The cars in the lot are mostly classics, unarmed show cars. Everyone I see looks scared too. Except Marcus. Marcus has his Nomex on, and his Bell full-coverage, and his silk scarf; and he is madder than a Pinto tailgunner.

"As of 0300 this morning," Marcus says, "a formal state of war existed between the Floral Gulch Autoduelling Society and the Amoco Gang of Stone City.

"*However,* as of *dawn* this morning, this county was declared a non-duelling zone by the . . . Eastern Driving Safety Enforcement League." For a little while the GAS Garage is quieter than it has ever, *ever* been. We all known about the EDSELs, but they are one of those nightmares one does not talk about, like pedestrian malls or Ralph Nader or patching a Corvette hull.

"Crush 'em," Hezekiah says. "*Cube* the suckers." Hezzy is wearing a T-shirt that says They Will Take Away My Hurst Shifter When They Pry It From My Cold Dead Fingers. I wonder how much he knows about this: Hezekiah is said to belong to the militant Spyder faction of the SCCA, and those guys are *crazy,* have been ever since the Eighties when they cubed Lee Iacocca inside a Chrysler Imperial.

There is a *thwobthwob* noise up above: It is a chopper, but much louder than the SportsTwentyFour birds. The *thwob* moves down, by the windows. No, it is not a sportswatcher. It is an Air National Guard hunter-killer unit, with rocket pods and a swivel-mount Vulcan. On its nose is a crookedly applied decal with the EDSEL insignia, a bright yellow YIELD sign. Hovering, the bird turns to display the legend stenciled on its side: DRIVE CAREFULLY OR ELSE.

Marcus hits a lever and steel shutters roll down. We can hear the chopper buzz off. It sounds like it is laughing, *whup, whup, whup.*

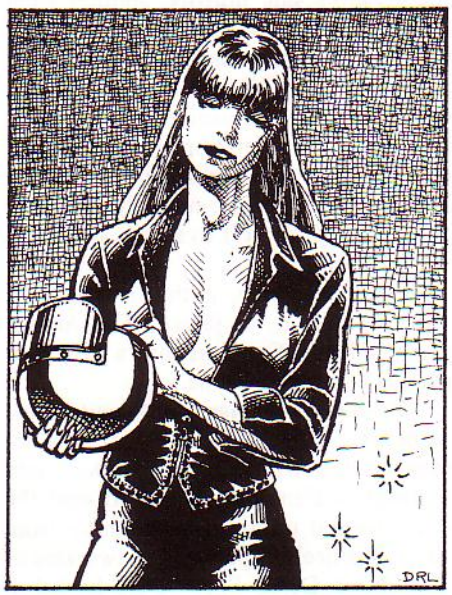
There is all at once a crossfire of suggestions. An immediate strike with heavy vehicles on the County Courtbunker. Cube the suckers (Hezzy again). Move to the Bourbon Free State. Assemble a nuke downtown (Holy Fangio, I never knew we had any Jackson Commandos in the club).

Marcus finally gets order with loud raps of a torque wrench on several heads. "This is all well and good," says he, "and we must come to a decision on this, but you are forgetting that there is a war on with the Amoco Kids, and having started at 0300 the war has seniority. Besides which, EDSEL has not yet killed any of our members." Someone whispers in Marcus' ear. "Excuse me. The Kids have still killed one more member than EDSEL."

"*Cube* the war," says Hezekiah, and there is a light in his eyes, like someone on TV who has discovered that Kitchen Magician really, really, really works. "This is more than a war. It's a *crusade* –" Then Hezzy looks very surprised and mutters something like oof-excuse-me and falls down flat and lies there.

Behind where Hezzy was standing, Vera is removing her stainless knucks. We all feel better, because Vera never kills anybody unless warning shots are first exchanged. She is wearing her dress leathers with the zippers at parade rest. The effect is, uh, autoerotic. She also has on Zig's helmet, and that is something other than kinky because it reminds us all that Zig was Vera's little sister.

"Now that we understand that there is a war on," she says politely, "we have the



problem of conducting it in the presence of EDSEL without triggering a protective reaction strike." She pulls off her helmet, gives her hair a toss. "I move we go street legal." She drops the knucks into the helmet.

Marcus smiles. We have all heard stories about Marcus and Vera and a 1400 cc Harley, but you did not buy this magazine to read about things like that. "A motion is presented for street legal," he says. "Second?"

Charlie "Egg Drop" Wu takes a frag grenade from his bandolier and puts it in the helmet. "Seconded."

And the chant goes up: "Street legal. Street legal." Votes fill the helmet: more knucks and grenades, gravity knives, combat-marque keychains. "*Street* legal. *Street* legal." Blackjacks, timing chains, Remington derringers, tire irons, parabellums, shock prods, Skoal tins, shuriken, Mace spritzers, Swiss Army knives, tire-tread checkers, Gerber Mark Ones, yellow NAPA hats, CB mikes, flare pistols. "STREET legal!" The helmet overflows. Ruger AutoMags, Uzis, knee mortars, LAWs stenciled "Vietnamese Property." "STREET LEGAL!" The Jackson Commandos contribute two lumps of metal marked "Bomb Component."

The motion passes.

On a bright clear Sunday morning I wheel my Jensen Interceptor III up to the self-serve terminal, put my Charge-A-Charge card in the slot and pull in. I wave at the attendant, who looks very nervous inside his armored glass booth. Then I wave at the EDSEL team in their sandbagged revetment. One leans on the tripod-mount MG1 while the other ducks down, no doubt flipping through the recognition silhouettes in *Jane's Combat Cars.* I grin. Despite its name, the Interceptor is not a roadwar vehicle; it is in fact so old that when built it ran on petroleum distillates. Do not laugh; they really did.

One of the EDSELs comes over. He looks at me, at the car, at the passenger in the front seat. "Nice, uh, car," he says. His nametag reads CLAYBROOK J.

"Don't you know it," say I. "I haven't dared to take Betsy out for a spin in, oh, forever, for fear one of those . . . well, *you* know . . . would shoot her up." I hope the Interceptor will forgive my calling her "Betsy."

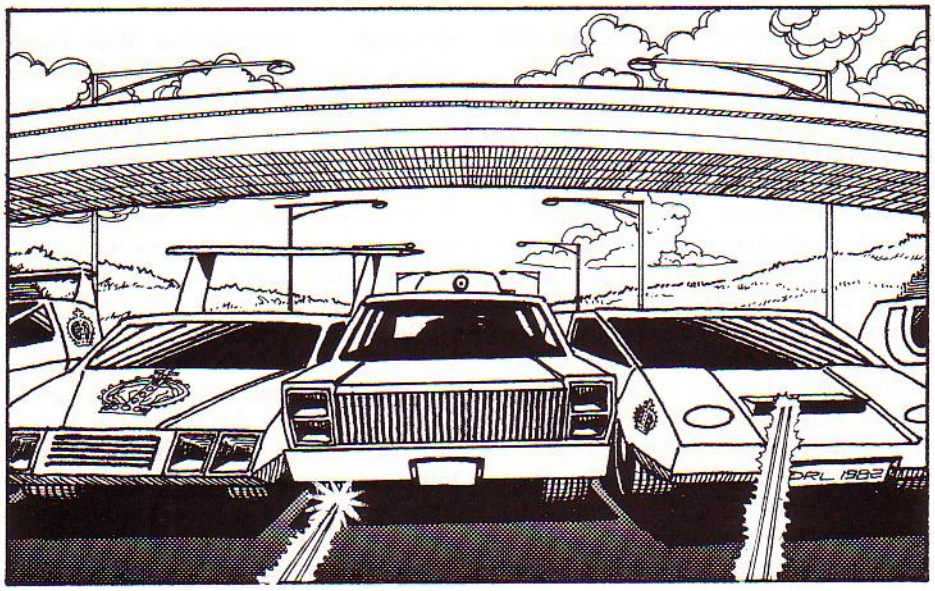
"Well, that's all over now," says the enforcer. He is not looking at me, of course. He is a post-adolescent male Midwestern American, and he can no more not respond to a top-down Jensen with Vera in the front seat than you can not respond to a koala down your trousers.

And while Gunner and Sarge are undressing the sheet metal with their eyes, a convoy of GAS vehicles, every one an antique and every one completely unarmed, rolls down Walnut Street not ten meters away. The station attendant looks very *very* nervous.

"Excuse me, sir," I say pulling plug and card, "but we're late for church already." As I pull away I wonder if the Enforcers can read my *I Speed Up For Small Animals* bumper sticker.

We drive past Floral Gulch High. Since it is Sunday, a number of the Voc. Rehab. students have been let out into the exercise yard. When they see us, they crowd close to the electrified fence, wave and cheer: "Smoke 'em! Redline 'em! *Cube 'em!*" I feel for these young people, who may never know the sound of recoil and disintegrating links, but I hope they do not blow our cover too early.

We arrive at State Road 37. There is a car in each lane, northbound and south-



bound, just beneath the intersection's caution blinker: Marcus in his Studi Avanti, its Loewy fenders like fangs; Coyote Watson's Roadrunner, its rear spoiler high enough to scrape the moon; Egg Drop Wu's '62 Vette, top down and sidepipes gleaming; Avenging Damon Angell in a Lamborghini Countach the exact color of fresh arterial blood; a space, which the Interceptor fills, and Brother Jed Firewall, the club padre, in a '47 Woody Wagon. Real wood.

"Break nineteen," says Marcus, and checks that we are all in postion. A few of the members have been briefly detained by enthusiastic EDSELs, but none for long. We are Street Legal, every one.

From the south comes the steady singing hum of hub motors, and the Amoco Kids swing round the lazy curve into view: sleek shapes of Nissans and Fiats, boxy ones of MoPar funnies. The ZExecutioner is in the lead, and I feel Vera get mad. On all the cars is painted the Gold Crown of the Amocos.

They have got a pretty good formation, but it wobbles a bit when they see what they are facing. I am not so dumb as to think it is a scared wobble; just a confused wobble.

Then Charlie Wu switches on his Sparkomatic HyperSound system, and the synthesized sound of twin-pipe glasspacks erupts much like rocketfire.

Perhaps too much like. The Amocos split ranks, and I hear the pulse of lasers warming up, and then *zzzap*. We have counted on this, zapgunners being much more triggerhappy than those who must pay for their ammo by the clip.

Blue-green beams converge on the Avenger's Lambo, it being the only thing there that looks like a car to the Kids (stupid Kids have no sense of history), and this also we have guessed. The Countach's windows are phototrope and the glaze finish is not Ziebart but NASA, and the beams bounce. A pulse caroms from the Avanti's side mirrors, another from the Vette's chrome, and front tires blow on two lead Kiddy cars. One does a good imitation of the Pike's Peak Hill Climb on the limestone embankment. The other, the Executioner, gets control, sort of, and veers into the green grassy median, where it sets off at least four mines before there is not enough car left to set off any more.

Vera grins.

Well, now battle, if that is what you want to call it, is joined. The Amoco Gang of Stone City gets into a strike formation and comes for us.

"Breaker," says Marcus, "execute Zama maneuver," and we throw our vehicles into reverse and open ranks, just like Scipio in front of Hannibal's tanks. Around the curve behind us, six cars clutch up from silent flywheels to power, and two vees of Demolition Derby Specials are hurled at the enemy: '63 Fairlanes, LTD four-doors, Peugeot 203s, and leading the pack with a mad white grin is Hezekiah in a yellow Checker Cab with the New York medallion still in the hood.

Three Amocos think they are going to dodge Hezzy's Checker, just like there were guys who thought Rosey Grier must be clumsy. The cab drives over the hood of a Fiat X13, and *through* the fender of a 'glass Mustang, and T-Bones a Renault Le Char, which rolls, and *rolls,* and plops into the median so gently that I think maybe the mines will not go off. But they do.

"Divide and conquer, club," says Marcus. At least he does not say over and out.

The padre has two Leyland Tiger Moths on his tail. The chase gets gradually faster, but the distance does not close, the Moth pilots doubtless wondering what has happened to their cars, not realizing that they are after a supercharged fuel turbine built to smuggle grain alcohol from the Bourbon Free State when it was still called Kentucky, and run on the same corn juice.

Up ahead of them is the railroad overpass, two lanes and no shoulder. At 200 kph or so Brother Jed throws in the regenerative brakes, the parking anchor, and for all I know is held back by angels with beating wings, and does an honest to Bob Mitchum bootlegger on the bridge. We can hear his "*Hallelujah!*" from here. The Woody's rear door flies open and Brother Jed's Sister Emmaline pops out.

The Moths have got no room to stop and no place to go except the narrow little slots to each side of Brother Jed, and their drivers are good enough to thread the needle. Just as they pass, Sister Emmaline shouts "*Bless* you boys," and tips out a two-hundred-liter industrial-size drum of Miracle Whip.

Tiger Moths do not have great adhesion on dry flat pavement, and in Miracle Whip, let me tell you they are dogs. One car just kind of keeps going, down both sides of the road at once. The other punches through the guardrails. The pilot ejects with the ragtop up. Brother Jed and Sister Emmaline are singing "Will the Circle Be Unbroken."

There is a less joyful noise, however: *Thwobthwob* up above, the EDSEL chopper. That is my cue. I put the Interceptor into tire-smoke mode. A laser zzzaps; I feel the heat. "Warning shot," says Vera. Then Charlie Wu cranks up his sound system: Chicago, the last chorus of "Stronger Every Day." Laser tubes implode. Fuel cells shatter. My side mirror stars. Vera says "I guess it was Memorex."

In the southbound lanes, Hezzy is backing and ramming, backing and ramming, cubing an Amoco without benefit of a crusher.

The chopper appears, buzzes us and drops a 40mm rocket, not too close. "Warning shot," Vera says again, and considering her ethics about warning shots I am not much soothed by it.

We are almost to the power-substation turnoff when a car appears, straight ahead: I switch lanes and he does too. It does not seem possible that the Amoco Kids could have gotten a kamicar up here. The vehicle ahead is low, sloped, and it has the EDSEL insignia on its hood, which is of silvery metal. Stainless steel, I think. "Saint Thomas McCahill," I say.

"A goddamn *DeLorean,*" says Vera, as the gullwing doors rise and the enforcers lean out with their burp guns ready.

"*Floor it,*" Vera yells, "*Dutch side,*" and I *do* it as she reaches under the seat. The EDSEL driver gawps; maybe he has never seen a British-drive car before.

We pass, left side to left side. Bolts

snick back. The other driver looks straight at us.

So Vera's cream pie gets him right in the aviator sunglasses.

In my fractured rear-view I see little bits of the car, wings spread and weaving like a gooneybird, until it goes into the median and takes off for Capistrano.

We pull into the substation. The club's Security-Six Q-van is already there, painted in Public Service livery; next to it is the Saab Wild Weasel. Vic and Sade are stringing cable from the Saab's hood to a transformer box.

I get out of the Interceptor. Vera slides over. "Take good care of her," I say, not sure which one I am talking to. Vera drives off. Well, there is still a war on.

I get into the Saab, start throwing switches. High-gain antennas sprout. The trunk pops open and the tracking dish points at the sky. A screen lights up with SportsTwentyFour coverage, hot off the satellite; our war live and in color.

We seem to generally be winning. Then the camera closes in on Marcus and Avenging Angell: The EDSEL chopper is after them, the door gunner firing off tracer bursts. Damon Angell floors the Countach, which seems to just enter hyperspace. But the Avanti's curbweight is telling against Marcus.

I put the antennas on autotrack and start booting a disk into the RoadApple. Teletext screens light up, and the plotboard shows a relative of cars and chopper.

"When you're ready," says Sade. "How's Marc doing?"

"He's holding his own," I say, because you do not tell a nice lady like Sade that her son is about to be smoked by a bunch of pacifists. "Splice it now."

Vic clamps the jumper cable to the transformer. There is arcing and sparking. Inside the Weasel's cockpit, red lights tell me to fasten my seat belt, which I do because the Martin Baker Recaro ejector seat is the fastest way out of here if anything goes wrong.

I plug an Atari joystick into the dashboard jack. On the TV screen, the chopper bucks and coughs.

The monitor says MATCHING ECM . . . ECCM DECRYPTING . . . SIGNAL CAPTURED.

I push the joystick with my thumb. The bird tips and slews sideways. The doorgunner falls out onto the pavement, picks himself up and runs to the nearest likely shelter, jumps inside and closes the door. Hezekiah turns around from the front seat and asks where to.

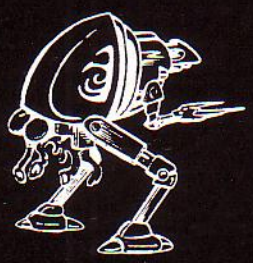
Using the stick as cyclic and the fire button as collective pitch, I fly the EDSELs around a bit. My control is not real smooth, but I still manage to use the skids to knock a couple of Amocos into the median. When the EDSEL crew has seen good and closely what goes on with the median strip, I bring the bird down and hover it about fourteen centimeters above the grass near the road. The passengers get the idea real quick and pile out the door. I let my thumb off the button and the chopper lands. Boom.

And that was the end of the war, and a couple of other things, too, including the Floral Gulch Autoduelling Society. Because though for many days nobody in the Gulch will admit that they have ever even heard of EDSEL, let alone carried a weapon for it, we could see which way the exhaust was blowing.

Brother Jed Firewall went to the Bourbon Free State, to carry the Good Word and five hundred gallons in a belly tank. Marcus and Vera are on the Grand Prix á l'Outrance circuit. Hezekiah got into Unlimited-class tractor pulls.

And me, I peddled my story to Ted Turner III, and now I am doing six hours of color commentary a week on Sports TwentyFour. I have a nice little collection of classic vehicles, and all of them are in running order, and I drive them whenever I can.

But each and every one of them is strictly Street Legal. And damned if you will ever get me up in a helicopter.



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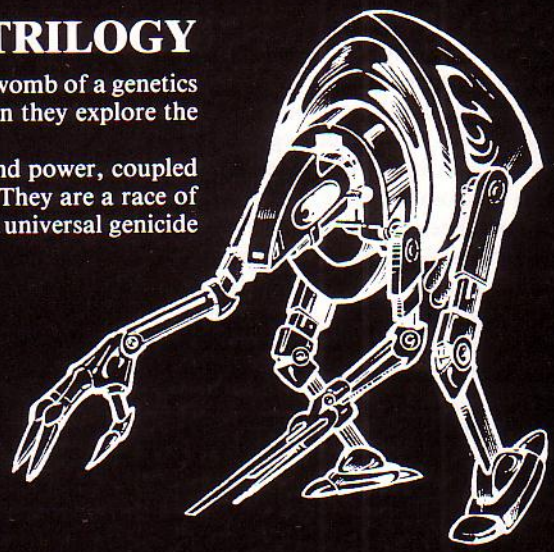

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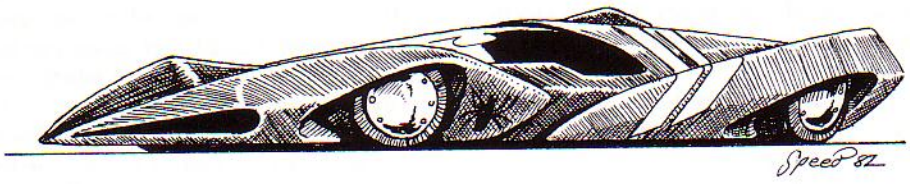
Street Legal Gaming Notes



by John M. Ford

"Street Legal" scenarios for ***Car Wars*** require some imagination on the part of the players. It's somewhat like the headwork that goes on in a properly run Jackson Comm – er, ***Killer*** game: if you had to go out to the garage, right now, and arm your automobile for battle, with only those items you could legally purchase at a hardware store (or bake shop) what could you do?

(Note to ***Killer*** players: If you decide to try this with *your* cars, I would appreciate not knowing anything about it.)

Another aspect of "Street Legal" play comes from thinking of ***Car Wars*** as not primarily a car-combat game, but as a set of rules for wheeled-vehicle movement, with a combat module. Every self-respecting gangster movie has a car chase in it. The James Bond flicks have already been mentioned. Who can imagine a banana republic without *federales* and *revolucionistas* chasing each other around in old US Army jeeps? Has Rémy Julienne burned all that rubber in vain?

Street Legal Weapons

Cream pies have the "firing" characteristics of grenades, and the effects on targets (including pedestrians) of paint. They cannot cause any physical damage.

Miracle Whip on the road (or Hellmann's, or whipped cream, or soap flakes) affects play like oil slicks or similar adhesion hazards. Some plausible means of dumping the friction reducer must be devised; the movie *Hopscotch* contains a lovely one.

Other "improvised" weapons follow the same principles. Handfuls of upholstery nails can be thrown from a car (one of John Dillinger's favorite tricks); since nails are not as efficient as caltrops, hitting them should cause only ½d6 damage.

Of course, depending on where your scenario is set, any or all hand weapons may be "street legal." You do remember *Easy Rider,* don't you?

The HyperSound System

HyperSound costs $2500, takes up 2 spaces and 200 pounds (it has *big* woofers), and operates from the power plant. It has three Damage Points capacity. The system is switched on in the same fashion as putting a weapon on automatic fire; it remains on until switched off.

Any laser fired within 5" of an operating HS system will implode on a roll of 10 or higher; within 2", 9 or better. Note that the laser must actually be fired, not merely come within range, and friendly lasers are also affected. Any fire, enemy or friendly, from a car within 3" of an operating system is at -2 to hit (the gunner is distracted). If the HS vehicle driver remains within 1" of another car for ten consecutive phases, the other car's glass will shatter on a 9 or better; effect is as painted windows, but the effect lasts for the duration of the combat.

If a pedestrian approaches within 2" of an operating HS system, s/he will pass out on a roll of 8 or higher (such a person is probably doomed unless rescued by a teammate). Persons inside cars are not affected. If it should become important to play, note that a HS driver wears a special, sound-baffled helmet and cannot communicate by voice/CB, and only persons wearing such helmets may drive or ride in a car with operating HyperSound. These helmets cost $100, and take up no weight or space; they protect wearers from the system's distraction and unconsciousness functions.

"Wild Weasel" Electronic Warfare Gear

EW gear costs $10,000, weighs 500 lbs. and takes up 4 cargo spaces. The rig is usually installed in the front-seat gunner's position, so the driver can reach it; a gunner cannot, therefore, ride in that position. The rig has five Damage Points.

Electronic warfare works in three modes: Jamming, Countermeasures (or Scrambling), and Counter-countermeasures (target painting).

Jamming mode is switched on and off just like any automatic fire. While it is on, fire at any friendly vehicle within 12" of the Wild Weasel is at -1 to hit, any vehicle within 6" at -2, and any vehicle within 3" at -3. Fire at the WW itself is at -4. Tripod-mounted and hand-held weapons are not affected by jamming functions.

Countermeasures mode is used by selecting ("interrogating") any enemy vehicle within line of sight. The target car's owner must immediately reveal whether his car has a targeting computer, and if so, what kind (low or hi-res). If the car has no computer, there is no further effect. If there *is* a computer, the WW operator may scramble it. Scrambling *inverts* the computer's bonus; a low-res computer becomes -1 to fire, a hi-res -2. This effect lasts from the phase in which the scrambling pulse is broadcast until the end of the turn; the WW operator may continue scrambling the same vehicle, by putting its system on automatic. A targeting computer may be switched off and rebooted; the process takes three full seconds (30 phases) to reboot. A rebooted computer must be rescrambled, necessitating another "to hit" roll by the Weasel (below). One pulse scrambles all computers aboard.

Target painting is conducted like scrambling, except that the target car does not reveal any information. Instead, any one *computer-equipped* (non-scrambled, of course) friendly vehicle may fire at the painted car at double its normal computer bonus, also ignoring any penalties for visibility (night, smoke, paint, etc.). A car may fire at a radar-painted target it cannot see (though of course its weapons must still be able to hit). Target painting may not be left on automatic.

Both Scrambling and Painting (Active EW) are exactly like firing weapons for purposes of turn sequence and actions-per-

turn; they require a to-hit roll of 3+, unaffected by normal combat modifiers. One may not make more than one Active EW attempt per turn. One may interrogate and scramble as a single action (when the first echo comes back positive, the operator simply boosts the signal) but *not* interrogate one vehicle and then scramble another.

Multiple Electronic Warfare (or, *Car Wars* Meets *Air War*)

If two (or more) Wild Weasels meet in a combat, the simplest thing to do is assume they cancel each other out and play the battle without them. However, I have been a wargamer much too long to think anyone will be satisfied with this.

A WW attempting Active EW at a vehicle inside an enemy Weasel's jamming umbrella must attempt to "lock on." Required roll to lock on a vehicle in the outer (12") jamming band is 7; in the 6" band, 8; in the 3" band, 9; and locking onto an enemy Weasel requires an 11. Once locked on, no further rolls are necessary until the attacker changes EW targets or lock-on is broken by countermeasures.

Breaking lock-ons is another kind of Active EW. The breaker must target the attacking Weasel (i.e., he must have identified it, or made a very lucky guess). A roll of 7 breaks lock-on, and counts as a firing-type action.

An interrogation pulse will reveal that the target car is a Wild Weasel if the jamming umbrella is on or the Weasel has conducted any kind of Active EW earlier in the current turn; if the target is maintaining "radar silence," the interrogation will only identify a targeting computer (if any).

Option: Since radar is reflected by raindrops, reduce all EW ranges by ¼ in light rain and ½ in heavy rain.

Escort EW: An Escort Model EW costs $500 and has space/weight 0 (just like a computer). A Wild Weasel must roll 5 or better to lock onto an Escort-equipped car (if the car is also inside a jamming umbrella, use the roll to penetrate jamming, unmodified). If an Escort-equipped car is locked onto, the WW operator must pick a point on the map within 1" of the attacking Weasel and announce to the Escort-owning player that the Weasel is within 1" of that point.

Rules for police radar, feedback (burning out the other guy's hardware), stealth configurations, etc. etc. are left to the interested reader. The thought of an Ohio speed trap in the Autoduel Age boggles the mind.

The Wild Weasel is not a single-combat vehicle, but a squadron support element; it should be in convoy with three or four conventionally-armed cars (with computers).

Wild Weasels draw a lot of fire once revealed, and are expensive targets; it is a good idea to leave the vehicle light and fast, capable of quick getaways. If it is armed, it should preferably be with MGs, whose ammo does not inconveniently explode, taking all those CRTs and copy-protected disks with it.

Ejection Seats

Some people will try anything to go on living. It isn't easy to devise a workable, survivable ground-launched ejector system within the technology of *Car Wars.* Assume that these are solid-fuel rocket ejectors, with a Rogallo wing that unfolds during boost phase, allowing the escapee to glide back down.

Ejectors cost $250, weigh 100 lbs., and take up no space (beyond that of the crew seat so equipped). If retrofitted to a car that did not originally carry ejectors, add $50 per seat to cut the breakaway roof panels. Ejectors can be fitted in any crew position.

The ejection sequence requires three phases: the sequence begins on any phase of a turn, and the seat fires on the third phase after. Ejecting counts as a firing action. Once the ejector is activated, the motors are lit and eject cannot be aborted. If the person is knocked unconscious or killed after initiation, no abort is possible; the body will launch on schedule.

An ejectee can glide to as far as a quarter-mile away, effectively removing the person from the current scenario (but not from future ones, which is the whole idea). SportsTwentyFour choppers will return an unarmed ejectee free of charge (in exchange for a 60-second interview).

Ejection is virtually idiot-proof. Landing is something else again. On touchdown, or impact, the character will take 1d-2 damage, minus one point for each prior successful ejection (but never less than 1d-4 if he is conscious). Body armor does not absorb this damage; it is treated as a fall, as in *Sunday Drivers.* You will note that an insanely lucky person *can* survive ejecting while unconscious. Holy Fangio protects his own.

If the car ejected from survives the combat, a new seat and roof panel may be installed for $200.

The design of kamicars (vanloads of explosive with an ejector seat, cruise control, and a bumper fuse) is left as an exercise for the reader.

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Winning Heroic Fantasy

by Richard Wolfe, Jr.

Not long ago, I began playing FBI's ***Heroic Fantasy***, and have found it to be quite an enjoyable game. During the course of my (mis?)adventures I have come up with a few ideas for beginning characters to stay alive and come out with more booty.

Character Types

When choosing a party, try to avoid such "big ticket" characters as trolls and giants. Why? There are several good reasons. First of all, high-cost characters are usually not cost-effective. Instead of getting a giant (ST 60, CON 60) I'd get eight human fighters (totals: ST 120, CON 240).

Table One is a cost effectiveness list. This was tabulated by averaging the characters' strength and constitution and then dividing that by their purchase cost [(ST+CON)/2/COST]. Magic-users and fighters are done on separate lists due to their different abilities.

Fighter Type	CEV	M-U Type*	CEV
Human	2.5	Human	1.8
Goblin	2.3	Hobbit	1.4
Hobbit	2.0	Elf	1.3
Elf	1.7	Dwarf	1.0
Dwarf	1.5	Leprechaun	0.9
Ogre	1.3	Ogre	0.8
Gremlin	1.2	Fairy	0.5
Fairy	1.0		
Troll	0.9	CEV = Cost Effec-	
Giant	0.8	tiveness Value	

*Note that the magic-user table only gives the CEV for blast spells and physical attacks; sleep and fireball both do the same damage no matter who casts it.

However, there is one major advantage to having a "big ticket" character. When a fireball hits your party of humans, goblins, etc. you will be neatly wiped out. On the other hand, a fireball wouldn't even dent a giant. But the sleep spell is a problem for giants and trolls; it affects them just as often as it affects a fairy (75%).

Fatal Fairies

After reading Table One, you might think that fairies are not a wise choice. This is not so. Remember: A fairy magic-user has the same chance of putting a monster to sleep as any other character. For this reason, and because of their low cost, fairies are a bargain. Get at least three, more if possible. Also, get a few gremlins or hobbits to defend the fairies. In combat, each fairy should prepare a sleep spell on Turn One and re-prepare it each time it is cast. Fairies are also good for casting fireballs, but if the spell backfires all of your fairies will be dead.

The first thing you should do on Turn One is to take the potions away from your fairies. Fairies are wimps and should not be allowed to carry valuable items through a dungeon. As a matter of fact, the first characters ever killed in a game of ***Heroic Fantasy*** were fairies.

Backstabbing

As in any fantasy role-playing game, there exists a certain element of betrayal. However, in a PBM game where the players don't know each other, there is a *lot* of backstabbing. Don't trust anyone. If you feel that another player and yourself trust each other, be prepared to turn on him. Better him than you!

Because of the simple combat system in ***Heroic Fantasy***, it is easy to defeat someone if you attack first and when you have complete surprise. If you do kill your "friend's" party, make sure none of his characters get away alive. If this happens, you're in big trouble. He will put together a rescue party which will eventually find you, and it will be your turn under the sword.

The Perfect Party and Beginning Strategy

Table Two, below, shows my idea of a perfect party. Each character is followed by the spell he should use and what his purpose should be.

On the first turn, take the potions away from the fairies and the leprechaun. Then, spread out in all directions. Take the treasure from all four rooms and then regroup in any one of the four rooms for some serious fighting with the monster there. If you were one of the first players in the game, there should be another party waiting for you in the entrance room by Turn Three. If there is, make friends with him. When the moment is yours, fireball him and then mop up the rest of his party.

I have played with this strategy and it seems to work fairly well in my game. Hopefully, those of you who are playing ***Heroic Fantasy*** or who are planning on playing ***Heroic Fantasy*** may benefit from these recommendations.

Character . . . . . Spell

3 Fairy Magic-Users . . . . . Sleep
Purpose: Cause opponents to fall asleep while the rest of the party cuts them to shreds

1 Fairy Fighter . . . . . —
Purpose: Draw enemy fire, just to confuse your opponent(s)

4 Goblins . . . . . —
Purpose: Protect fairies

2 Human Magic-Users . . . . . Blast
Purpose: Blast opponents, major offensive magic

1 Hobbit Magic-User . . . . . Fireball
Purpose: Burn opponents

1 Leprechaun Magic-User . . . . . Sleep
Purpose: Same as fairies

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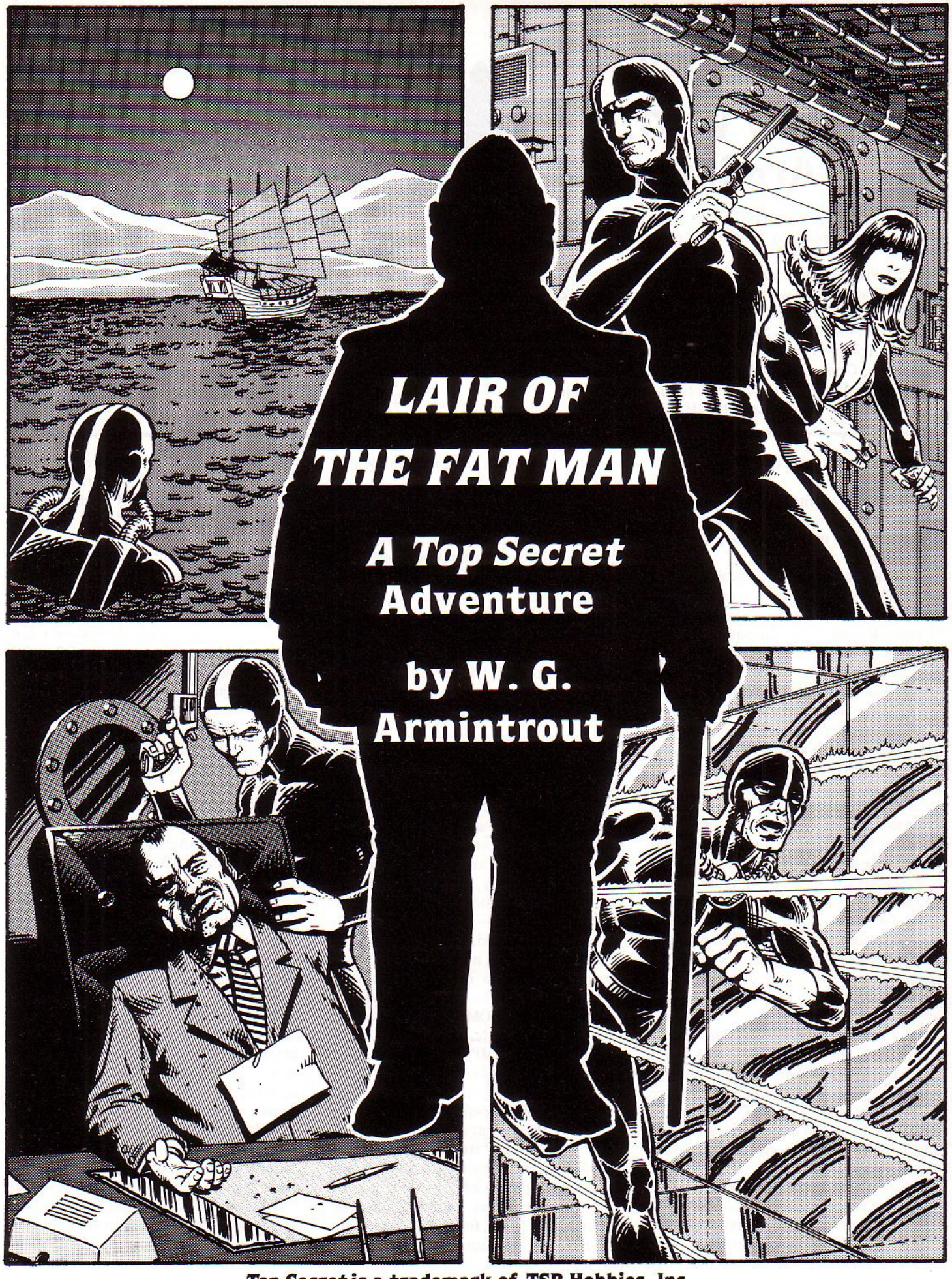

LAIR OF THE FAT MAN

A Top Secret Adventure

by W. G. Armintrout

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Lair of the Fat Man

by W. G. Armintrout

Art by Denis Loubet
Map Graphics by Elisabeth Zakes and Denis Loubet

Playtesters: (*Utah Team*) Rich "Rasputin" Davis, Tracy "The Swede" Dustin, Bill "Yorski" Jackson, Alex "Thermite" Orton, and Paul "Tojo" Potter; (*Texas Team*) Norman Banduch, Scott Bowles, Tonya Cross, John Defibaugh, Hal Frazier, Kelly Grimes, Kerry Grimes, Alvin Johnson, Ron Jorgenson II, Larry Miller, and Chris Smith, Agents of MAGE.

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Introduction

This is an adventure for ***Top Secret,*** but not an ordinary one. It's not a mission in the grim tradition of Ian Fleming's James Bond.

In truth, this adventure has all the nail-biting drama of several superspy movies released years ago – the gritty realism of "Casino Royale," the dramatic integrity of "The President's Analyst," the *film noir* quality of "The Silencers," the hard-hitting tragedy of "Our Man Flint." In short . . . it's silly.

Administrators, take note: This does not mean that it's *safe.* If you intend to use the adventure as written, don't run it as part of an ongoing campaign; it works best as a one-shot change of pace. One-time character generation rules are given in the section below on the UNISTOMP team.

So, what's it all about? Picture this, if you will:

A madman, calling himself The Fat Man, is stealing the world's most precious military secrets from the great powers. He *claims* to be dedicated to unilaterally disarming the world . . . but who can believe him?

At last the nations of the planet, alarmed by this threat, locate what seems to be the lair of this incredibly dangerous man. They send in their top team to smoke him out – a UNISTOMP action team, from the top secret United Nations anti-terrorist agency, representing four major world powers.

But can they smoke him out? Can agents on the action team, composed of agents from the KGB, CIA, and other spy agencies, forget their hostilities long enough to deal with the Fat Man? Will it work?

That's the adventure posed by this module. This scenario is intended as a short adventure lasting one or two evenings, and makes an interesting break from the usual sort of adventuring (indeed, ***Lair*** can be the excuse for a really different sort of party). Although not meant to link with a ***Top Secret*** campaign, a good Administrator could design a campaign around the UNISTOMP agency.

The UNISTOMP Team

The first thing to do is to set up the UNISTOMP Action Team.

What is UNISTOMP?

On October 12, 1982, the United Nations in secret session resolved that international terrorism had threatened the world for long enough. They created a secret UN agency, the United Nations International Strategic Taskforce On Mutual Protection – UNISTOMP! Action Teams were formed, each composed of agent pairs from as many as six different countries, ready to drop whatever they were doing for their own countries and report to UNISTOMP Headquarters in Belgrade in case of terrorist crisis.

Since UNISTOMP action teams were "on call" and ready to respond to any emergency, the players will need to form their action team *before* they know the nature of the adventure. There are only three steps to get started, all of which should be done prior to whenever the adventure is to be played.

First, each player must pick his own country. There are four to choose from: USSR, USA, Britain, and Red China. There may only be one player from each country. The number of western countries in play (USA and Britain) must equal the number of Communist (USSR and Red China) in play.

Second, each player rolls up his character. This character will be the Senior Agent from his country. When rolling him (or her) up, read the six Primary Attribute die rolls as though the highest roll is the tens' place. (Thus, a roll of 2 and 6 always makes 62.)

Third, each player may roll up the Junior Agent from his country. Junior Agents are *non-player characters* under the control of the Administrator (once the adventure begins, all die rolls for Junior Agents will be made by the Administrator *in secret*). However, Junior Agents are supposed to obey the orders of the Senior Agent from his country.

Players must get together to choose a Team Language that all agents must speak. They may also share information about their characters to ensure that the team has a good balance of languages and player-choice Areas of Knowledge. On the other hand, players are not *required* to share any information . . . and, being spies, might even *lie.*

If there are more than four players, the extra players may fill in as Junior Agents. A player-controlled Junior Agent is still required to obey orders from his Senior Agent, and does not receive as much pre-adventure information. A Senior Agent may look at a Junior Agent's attributes and AOKs (if they are from the same country), but a Junior Agent may not know his Senior Agent's data unless the Senior Agent decides to tell him.

The next steps prepare the UNISTOMP

team for this particular adventure, and are best if done just prior to beginning play.

The Briefing

The Administrator gives each Senior Agent a private briefing from that agent's national spy agency. (If the agent were American, the Administrator would be the CIA chief; if Russian, the KGB chief, etc.) The briefing should go something like this:

"The peace of the entire world is at stake.

"A madman calling himself The Fat Man has decided to do away with the world's weaponry. He is, of course, completely insane. Unfortunately, he is crazy like a fox . . . he has struck a vital blow to our national security."

The Administrator now reveals one of these secrets, depending on the agent's country.

American: "No doubt you are familiar with plans for the Stealth aircraft series? Operatives working for this Fat Man have gotten their hands on a sheet of plastic film, one meter square, containing the electrical blueprint for an electronic chip essential to the Stealth II series. This sheet must not remain in enemy hands – you must bring it back, or see that it is destroyed."

Soviet: "Agents for this imperialist, capitalist terrorist have somehow managed to make off with one of our most secret weapons. We call it the Micro-Bomb. It is a tactical nuclear device, small enough to fit into the glove compartment of most automobiles. This must be recovered – we cannot allow other countries to know what we have developed."

British: "You'll understand that Her Majesty's Government is rather upset over the loss of a submersible, the *Sea Spectre,* and her crew. She's a research submarine designed for underwater oil prospecting. The sticky part of this (ahem . . .) is that she is heavily armed. After this Falklands episode, you understand, it was felt that she would need a full array of torpedoes and missiles. Well, it's a pretty mess. We must retrieve this sub, which we know the Fat Man possesses, before any other country can guess that Great Britain has taken the very first steps towards an underwater oil war . . ."

Chinese: "Our country has been shamed. Wing Pau, acupuncturist to the Chairman himself, has been abducted by this Fat Man. We know this to be true. But why? It is a great mystery. Wing Pau is merely an acupuncturist, with no knowledge of political or military secrets – so far as we know. But we cannot be sure. Your mission is to bring back Wing Pau . . . so we can question him."

The briefing continues:

"At last we've made a break in this case. Our own government has learned, and so alerted UNISTOMP, the possible location of this Fat Man's lair. We know that he is linked to a fleet of pirate junks operating out of a river in southeast Asia. This is the chance we've waited for – infiltrate that junk fleet, locate the Fat Man, get our secrets back, and kill him – or better yet, let the UNISTOMP team take him back to Belgrade for questioning! Alive!"

The Administrator now makes two die rolls, each on 2d6, to discover what other information to reveal to the player from Table One: Information.

Table One: Information

Die Roll	*Information*
2, 3, 4	Receive a *clue* about your ally. (USA and Great Britain are allies; USSR and Red China are allies.)
5	The Junior Agent for China or Great Britain, whichever is hostile, is a double agent in your employ!
6	Receive a *clue* about China or Great Britain, whichever is hostile.
7	Receive a *clue* about USA or USSR, whichever is hostile.
8	The agent's country has already sent its own agent into the area after the Fat Man. That agent has either been captured or killed. To determine if a person is this agent, say to him or her: "Do you ever go fishing?" The agent will reply: "I thought fish were out of season."*
9	The Junior Agent for USA or USSR, whichever is hostile, is a double agent in your employ!
10	Your informants indicate that the Fat Man is just a front for a notorious Indonesian bandit queen, the famed Dragon Lady. (Administrator: This clue is false. Instead, this means that this agent's Junior Agent is a double agent in the employ of the Fat Man!)
11, 12	The Junior Agent for your ally is actually a double agent in your employ! (For this event, USA and Great Britain are allies, and USSR and Red China are allies.)

*If this clue comes up more than once, make up new passwords.

The table refers to "hostile" nations. Assume that Western nations are hostile to Communist ones and vice versa. Taking event 5, therefore: A Russian spy would find that the Great Britain Junior Agent is his double agent, or a British agent would find a Chinese agent working for him.

These are the clues referred to in the table:

America: "The Yankees have lost a vital technological secret to the Fat Man, some sort of blueprint or master plan to a military vehicle or device."

Soviet: "The Kremlin is frantic! Some sort of top secret terrorist device has been run off with by the Fat Man – something small, extremely portable, and terribly powerful in some way that we haven't yet determined."

British: "The British have a top secret naval base in the Orkneys, and one of the docks is standing empty. Our hypothesis is that whatever was in it has been stolen, perhaps by the Fat Man. It must be some sort of naval vessel, but we have no idea precisely what kind."

Chinese: "Sources in Peking indicate that a key man in the Chinese hierarchy has been abducted by the Fat Man. Whoever he is, the Chinese are making every effort to get him back. He must be important."

The briefing continues:

"Your mission, first and foremost, is to defang this Fat Man. Stop him in his tracks! Prevent him from holding your country hostage! Cooperate as much as you dare with your UNISTOMP partners.

"Secondly, recover our secrets from the madman without exposing them to the rest of the world.

"Thirdly, we're certainly not the only country this madman has stolen secrets from! Your government would appreciate it if your could pick up any other secrets that you might find lying around . . . understand?

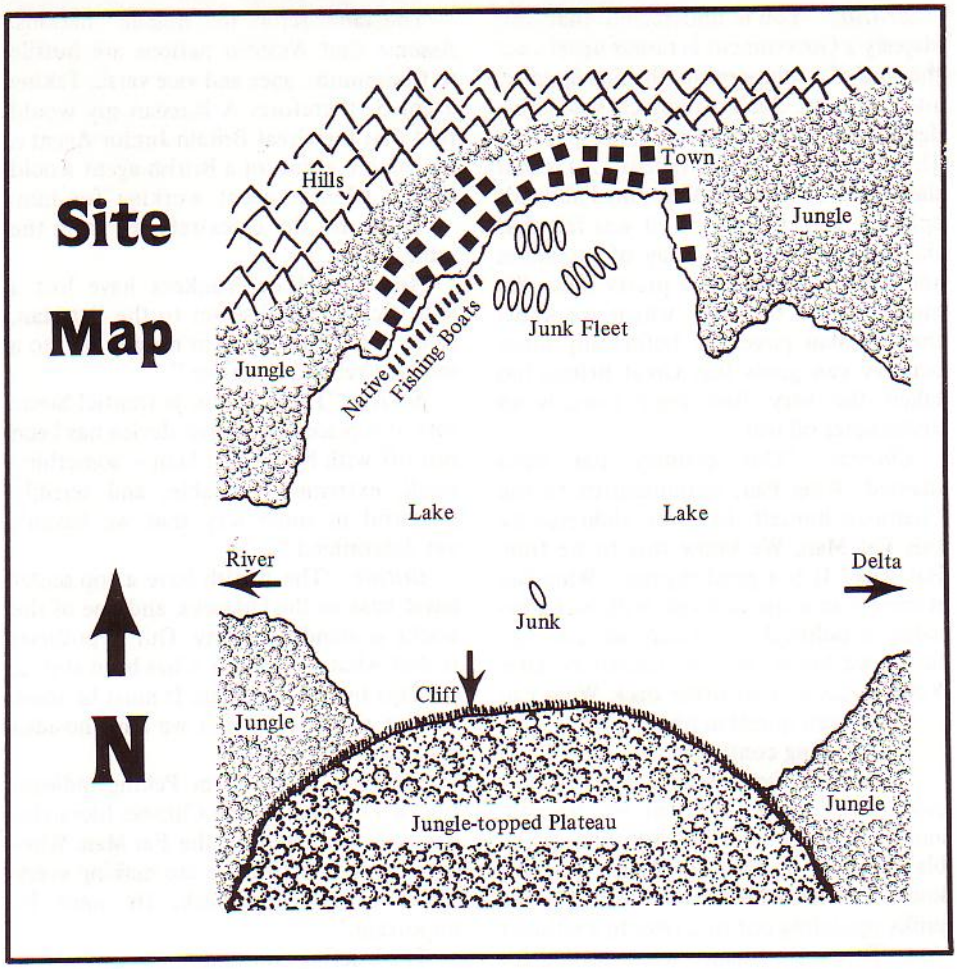
"This mission is one of stealth and secrecy, not one of simple gunfire and explosives. I have full confidence in you. Good luck!"

(Shake the agent's hand as though the briefing is over, then . . .)

"Oh, yes, I almost forgot . . . If you can manage to dispatch any of the enemy agents on the UNISTOMP team and lay the blame at the Fat Man's door – that would certainly be nice. But don't allow yourself to cripple team strength before your objectives are in sight, and do not allow yourself to be blamed. And remember – the Fat Man comes first."

So ends the private briefing.

Next comes the briefing of all agents on the team by the UNISTOMP chief in



Belgrade. It should go something like:

"Thanks to the work of one of the national spy agencies, and confirmed by other sources, UNISTOMP has located the lair of an international terrorist, the Fat Man. He appears to be operating in conjunction with a pirate fleet of junks run by a bandit chieftain named Black Charlie. These junks are anchored just upriver from a river mouth in southeast Asia.

"We have made arrangements for a Japanese submarine to take your team as far as the approaches to the river mouth. The sub cannot proceed upriver due to dangerous shallows and shifting mud banks. You will then penetrate the river and do your best to locate and pull the fangs of this Fat Man.

"Good luck!"

Equipment

The players may now equip their Senior and Junior Agents. Money is no object. Each Senior Agent receives:

• *One 2-man torpedo.* This vehicle is capable of transporting two divers in scuba gear. The forward passenger has all maneuver controls – speed, rudder, diving controls – as well as the two forward-mounted spearguns. Between the forward and rear seats is a 2' x 3' hatch. Beneath this is a storage area 2' deep, which can carry a maximum of 40 lbs cargo. The forward passenger also has controls for the nose-mounted spotlight and flashing red lights on the tail fins. Speed: 5 knots underwater, 3 knots surface; +2 knots with only one rider; speed halved in reverse. Torpedoes are silent running; they are 15' long, 3' in diameter, and do not carry a warhead. Maximum range is 10 hrs.; maximum depth is 60 ft. for purposes of this adventure.

• *One standard speargun* (weapon ff on the Weapons Chart).

• *One scuba suit* (air supply is 6 hrs – 3 hrs per tank).

• *Other equipment* as chosen from weapon and equipment lists in ***Top Secret.*** All equipment must be able to fit in the torpedo cargo space. Total weight of all equipment must come to 20 pounds or less. Weapon weights appear on page 23 of the ***Top Secret*** book; equipment weights are on pages 8-9.

Each Junior Agent receives the same equipment *except* for the two-man torpedo (they share this with their Senior Agent).

As the adventure begins, all UNISTOMP team agents and their torpedoes are being offloaded by a Japanese diesel submarine just off a river mouth somewhere in southeast Asia. All "other equipment" begins the game stowed in the cargo hatch of the agents' torpedoes, except for personal spearguns.

Part One: On the River

First, some recommendations for the Administrator.

• *Playing area:* Playing this adventure will require at least two areas where players and/or the Administrator can go and confer out of earshot of the other players (when the party splits up, when certain countries' agents have a pow-wow, when one agent has special instructions to the Administrator, for giving orders to a double agent, etc.).

• *Secret messages:* The Administrator must be prepared to accept and give secret messages to any of the players – by 3 x 5 cards in plain sight, by passing folded notes in secret, using a Magic Slate, whatever. The players will probably want their Administrator to be adept at making it look like he wants to talk to them even when they passed the note asking to call them out of the room.

• *Junior Agents:* Junior Agents do *not* attend the private briefings, and therefore do not start the adventure knowing which of their own national secrets have been stolen by the Fat Man, *nor* which enemy agents are double agents working for their country. Unless they are double agents, Junior Agents will always obey orders from a Senior Agent. (An Administrator may call for a Courage or Willpower Check under severe situations.) All die rolls for Junior Agents during the game are made by the Administrator, in secret.

If a Junior Agent is a double agent, he will give priority to orders from the Senior Agent he really works for rather than the Senior Agent from his own country. For instance, a Chinese Junior Agent working for British intelligence would obey an order from the British Senior Agent to shoot his own Chinese Senior Agent! (A double agent will also follow orders from anyone else authorized by his Senior Agent – a Senior Agent could tell his traitor to obey orders from his Junior Agent.)

In some cases, a Junior Agent could be a traitor to more than one other country. The Administrator must then randomly determine to which foreign country the agent is most loyal.

If a Junior Agent is a double agent for the Fat Man, he is automatically loyal to

the Fat Man over any other countries for whom he might be a traitor. An agent for the Fat Man will always miss when shooting at agents of the Fat Man. If detected and forced to talk, a Fat Man agent will reveal the truth about the junk fleet, the presence of the submarine, and the fact that the set-up is a trap. He knows nothing else, including the layout of the submarine and the nature of the traps set.

The Japanese diesel submarine releases the action team and its two-man torpedoes just beyond the river mouth, and will wait for their return. The team will have no trouble negotiating the winding, muddy channels of the river delta towards the junk fleet upstream.

Two hours upstream (10 pm), the many riverlets of the delta converge to form a large lake. The much larger river continues to lead west from this lake. On the north shore of the lake is a dense jungle rising into shallow hills. A native village sprawls at the base of these hills. To the south, a cliff rises from the water for a thousand feet, topped by more jungle. The bandit fleet of junks is in this lake (refer to map on page 24).

The agents have a special problem with the water. It is muddy and clogged with floating logs and debris in the river, in the lake, and in the delta. Visibility is severely restricted – agents can see for 10 feet underwater, and can make out lights at 20 feet underwater. Sonar and underwater radar are effectively useless.

It is late in the evening. The lights in the village are going out. There are no signs of life from the fleet – no drunken shouts, whoops of laughter, or waving torches.

Agents will find nothing of use in the jungle, on the cliff, in the hills, in town, or in the main junk fleet. In the unlikely event that players venture to these locations, the Administrator is free to extemporize situations and confrontations. All junks may be considered identical in layout and crew to the one to be detailed, except for an engine room where the diving lock is located. There are no military or police in the village. The sailors in the main junk fleet know no secrets except that cargo is taken to the solitary junk in the center of the lake, but none is ever taken away . . . (*and* all shipments are in the dead of night!).

The solitary point of interest is the solo junk. (Refer to layout of the junk.)

This junk's secret is that it is a relay point for the Fat Man. On the bottom of this junk is a hatch leading to an airtight diving lock. Divers for the Fat Man enter the ship through this hatch, unlock the hatch leading to the rest of the ship, and allow the junk's crew to load food, small arms, and other supplies into the lock. Afterwards, the divers relock the hatch and transport the goods . . . somewhere.

Specific details:

• *Guards:* "X"s mark the guards' locations. The fellow at the base of the foremast is usually sitting down, out of sight of the casual observer, and has a .45 Thompson submachine gun (q); the two fellows aft both have 9mm Uzis (t). All others have .45 US revolvers (k). The guard at the front of the aft deck is the Mate and is in charge of the ship. (For stat information, see "Final Points" at the end of this article.)

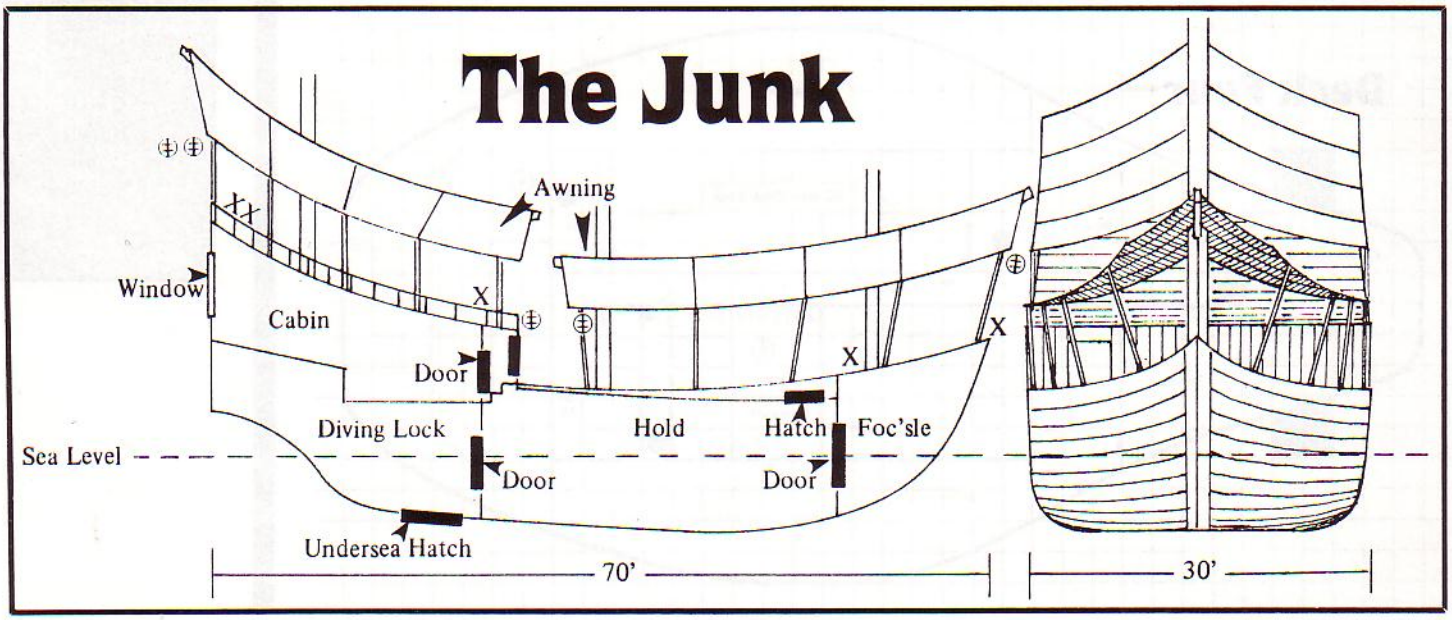
• *Stairs:* The stairs need some extra explanation. The door leading down from the rear of the main deck is on the right side of the ship. Three steps lead down to the door of the Cabin. The stairs then go across the width of the ship until they reach the bottom of the ship. A door to the left then leads to the Diving Lock; to the right is the Hold.

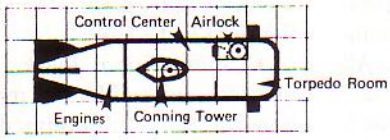
• *Cabin:* This is Black Charlie's living quarters and, unlike the rest of this ship, is clean and well-furnished. The deck is split-level due to the curvature of the ship. Aft is office space with desk and shelves. There are potted plants along the inside of the aft picture window (which is generally closed, but can be opened). The forward portion of the cabin contains a single bed (*not* a cot), closets, and a card table with a game of chess in progress. The door is not locked. There are two sealed portholes on each side of the cabin; they are covered with embroidered curtains.

If surprised, Black Charlie will be found playing chess by himself at the card table. He wears a sleeping robe, black silk cap and fur slippers, and is unarmed. If given a warning, Black Charlie will arm himself with the .45 revolver (k) in his desk drawer and ambush anyone entering his room.

On the desk is a panel in plain sight with two buttons. One button causes a wooden panel in the wall to rise, revealing a closed circuit monitor (which is not working). The second button apparently does nothing. Wires from it lead through the deck to the Diving Lock below, but inspection will show that the wires have been chewed apart or otherwise broken. Black Charlie believes the second button sounds an alarm to the Fat Man *and* activates the connection between the closed circuit monitor and one of the Fat Man's henchmen; he will be disappointed when this button doesn't seem to work.

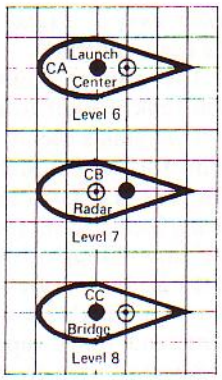
• *Diving Lock:* The door leading to this room is locked from the inside. Battering the door will wear away its wooden covering, revealing a metal sliding door.



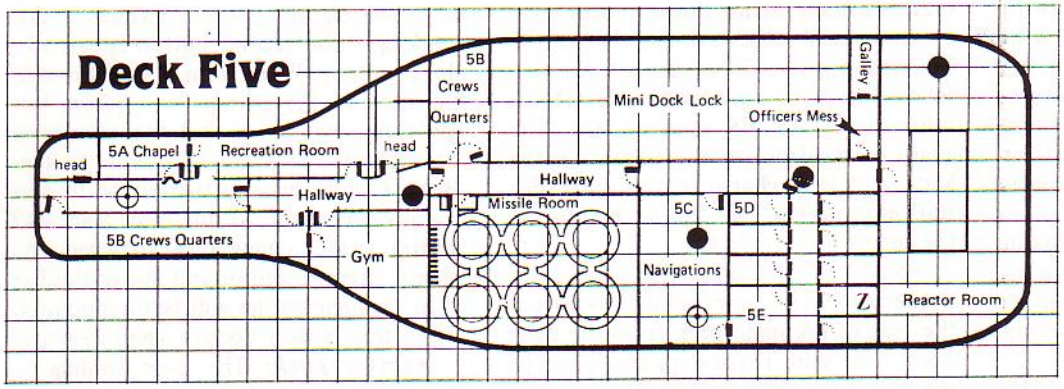


Mini-sub

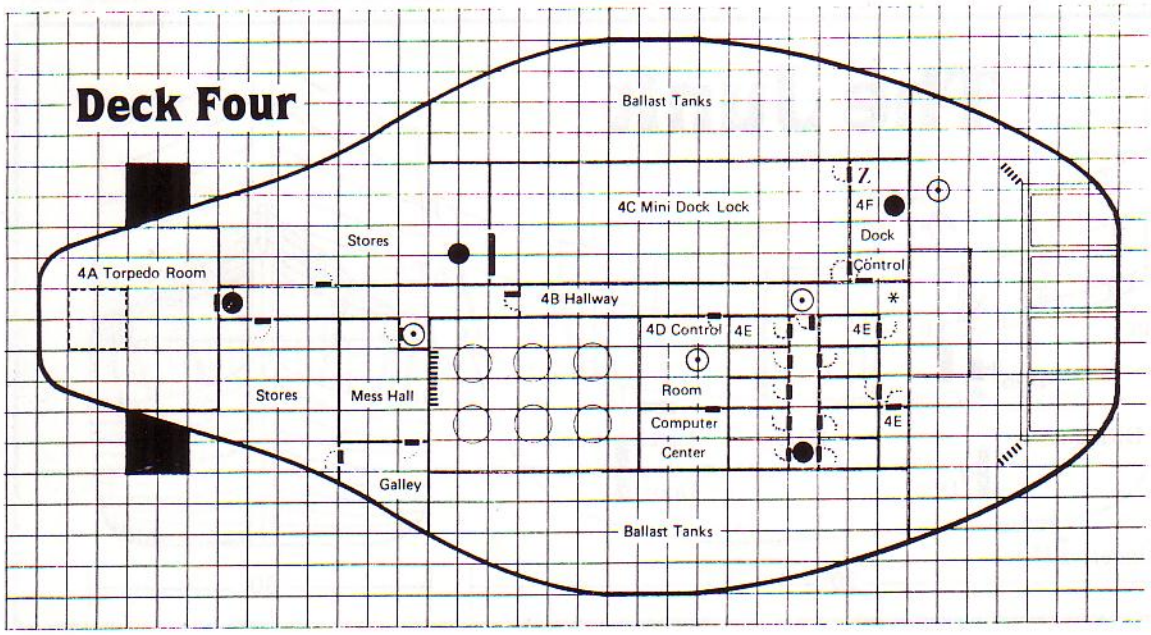
Conning Tower



Deck Five



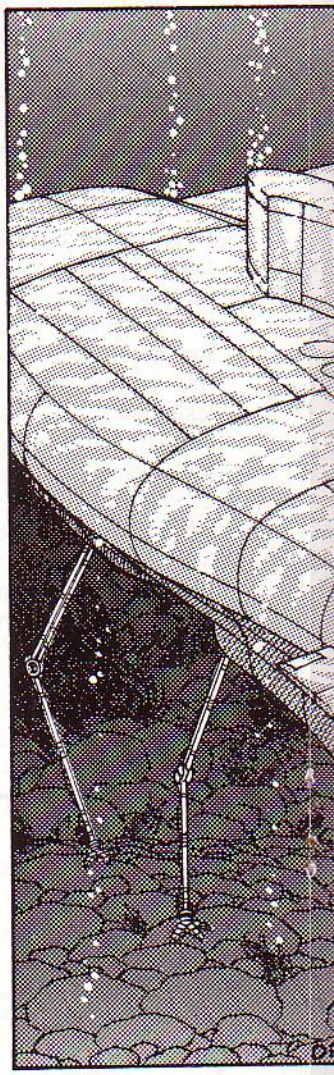
Deck Four



Map Key

Outer Hull
Interior Walls
Details Within Rooms
Closed Hatch*
Open Hatch
Ladder Leading to Hatch in Cei
Hatch on Floor
Stairs
Vertical Ladder
Zombie Starting Location (four

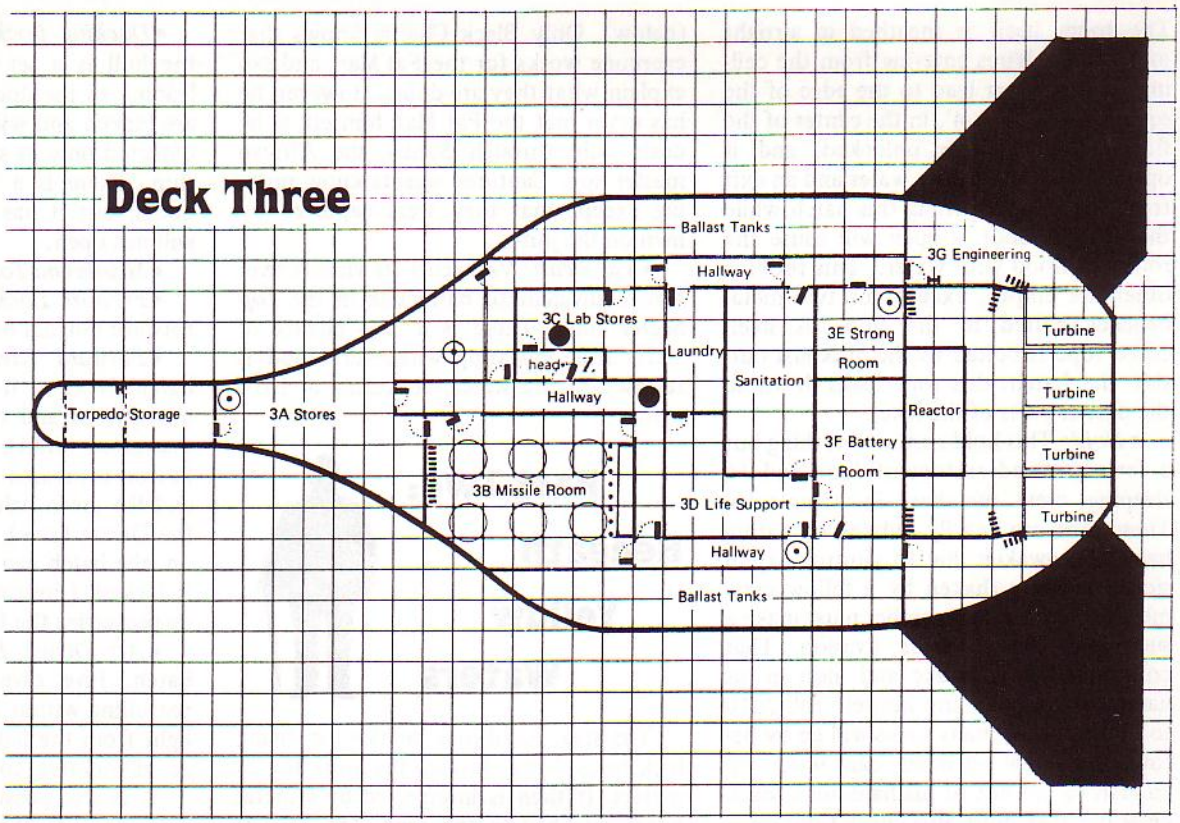
*"....." indicates direction and



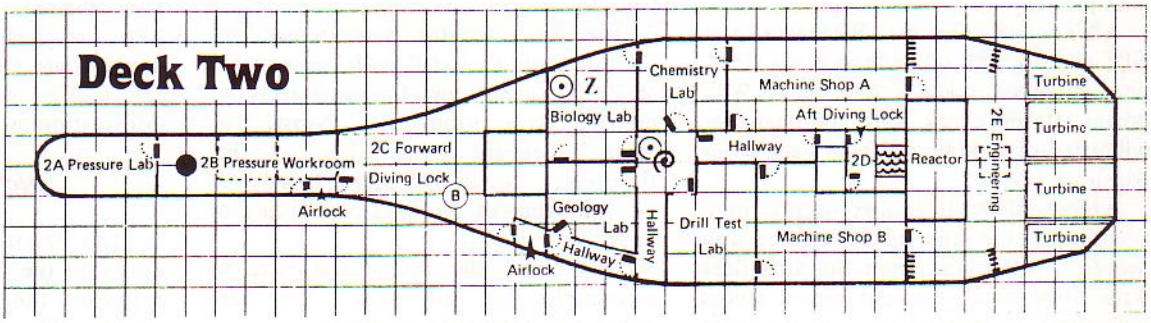
Ceiling ◯

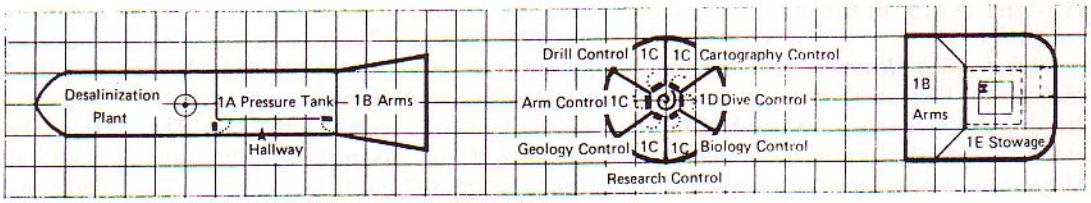
ur-man team) Z

d distance hatch swings



The *Sea Spectre*





The room itself is sheathed in airtight metal walls. Wires entering from the ceiling of this room lead to the edge of the square hatch, 4' x 4', in the center of the floor. The hatch is unlocked, and if opened, will reveal lake water and an exit from the ship. (Opening this hatch while the airtight door is open will cause the room to flood with water.) This room is otherwise empty, except for two metal benches bolted to the floor. A steel-cored rope is bolted to the junk just outside the hatch; this rope leads down to the deeper parts of the lake.

• *Hold:* This hold contains nothing but a few scattered cartons of food and 14 sleeping crew members in hammocks. These crew are heavily sedated by a drug habit. To awaken due to gunfire, explosions, or being shaken by a fellow crew member, each crew member must make a successful check versus Evasion. That crew member is awake and alert in his hammock and can arm himself; roll 2d10 to find out how many turns will go by before the crew member can wake up enough to get out of his hammock. Each crew member must also check Courage – if successful, that person will investigate what awoke him; if unsuccessful, that person will try to jump overboard and swim for shore. At the head of each hammock is a cotton bag containing personal possessions, a knife (hh), and a .45 revolver (k). All crew are ethnic Chinese and speak Chinese as their native language.

• *Foc'sle:* The door leading into this part of the ship is locked. Inside, it is dark, unlighted, and smells like oil. It contains anchor chains, tools, oily rags, and frightened, non-attacking rats. If there are any Captured Agents in this adventure (event 8) they will be found gagged and bound here, captured by the junk pirates.

• *Willpower Checks:* Whenever any NPC on this junk other than Black Charlie is wounded, make a check versus Willpower. If the check fails, the character will attempt to jump overboard and swim for shore.

• *Fleet Alert:* If gunfire occurs (non-silenced), if the junk sinks, or if the junk moves, a small boat from the junk fleet with three mildly curious armed sailors will come to investigate from the main pirate fleet. In case of steady, heavy, sustained gunfire, a fire, or explosions, two junks with fully alerted crews will investigate (and remain in the area of the solitary junk).

• *What They Know:* Crew members know only that cargo is taken into the diving lock under the command of mysterious divers who appear from nowhere. They also know about the vasnacuri (below). Only Black Charlie knows that everyone works for the Fat Man, and can explain what they are doing. However, he has never met the Fat Man himself, as he deals only through Simba, the African master spy. Captured agents know nothing except that they were captured by men on the junk.

• *Vasnacuri:* Vasnacuri are vicious river fish, equivalent to barracuda in the ***Top Secret*** rules. There is a 35% chance of 1d10 fish appearing whenever blood is released in the water, appearing in 1d10 turns.

Part Two: Beneath Yellow Waters

The steel-cored rope outside the diving lock leads down through the murk for 20 meters. It then is intersected by a metal beam attached to the rope. The rope is slack beyond this point; continuing to follow it down vertically will lead to a coil of rope on the bottom of the lake. The metal beam is holding the rope with articulated metal pincers/fingers.

Following the beam will lead to a universal joint, where the metal beam joins another metal beam. The new segment continues to slope downwards, but very gently. At this point the agents will be able to see some sort of metal plating (the hull) within 10 feet. This is the side of the submarine.

Continuing to follow the beam will lead to a bulge on the bottom of the submarine. Other beams ("arms") lead away from this bulge.

The Administrator must remember: (1) that visibility is 10', with lights visible at 20'; (2) not to give the game away by referring to a "submarine," "vessel," or "ship." Let the players discover this themselves. For all they know, this object is some kind of underwater building or base.

Eventually, the agents will have to reconnoitre the submarine. There are only a few potential entrances:

• *Conning Tower:* There is a hatch in the deck on top of the conning tower. It is locked and will not open from the outside.

• *Top Forward:* There is an unlocked hatch on the top forward hull. It leads to a water-filled airlock which will cycle to allow the agents access to the ship. The airlock will hold six people at one time (the topedoes will not fit).

• *Docking Lock:* On the right top of the hull is a set of huge double doors leading to the docking lock. These doors are locked and will not open, and can be detected only as seams in the hull of the ship. There is a hatch in one of these doors, but it has been welded shut and will not open.

• *Missile and Torpedo Hatches:* Locked.

• *Pressure Lock:* Double doors on the forward bottom of the ship, locked.

• *Forward Diving Lock:* 20' square hatch. Next to it is a control panel with one button and two lights (one red, lit; one green, unlit). Five minutes after the button is pressed the red light will go out and the green light come on (pressurizing the Diving Lock). When the green light is on, the hatch can be opened; otherwise it is locked. (Pressing the button again will de-pressurize the Lock.)

• *Aft Diving Lock:* 10' square *open* hatch. Five divers with spearguns are patrolling within 20' of this hatch (bright light from the hatch will show the divers as silhouettes to anyone approaching).

It is also possible to create one's own entrance. A shaped charge (plastique only, 20 ounces) or a thermite bomb will create such a hole. This will cause flooding, causing the nearest watertight doors to close. This also alerts the crew.

The interior of the submarine – five decks, the conning tower, and a minisub on board – is detailed in the map section. Non-crucial rooms, the ones without a code number, are left to the Administrator to furnish on the spur of the moment as the adventure unfolds. (Not only does this give the Administrator something creative to do, but it also adds variation – your vision of a Desalinization Plant may vary quite a bit from my own.) Important rooms are described below, after their key number. Locations of NPCs are given in this section, but their descriptions are given later – don't be confused by an unfamiliar name with no information on the person.

Deck One (Bottom)

(1A) *Pressure Tank.* Locked double doors on the bottom of the tank are an exit from the ship; locked double doors on the ceiling lead to the Pressure Workroom on Deck Two. This tank contains four vasnacuri and seawater, and is lighted. The inspection hatch leading to the hallway will not open so long as the tank is full.

(1B) *Arms.* There are two arm compartments. Nine waldo-like arms lead from the forward compartment – one of these, the fourth, has the Soviet mini-nuke in a watertight casing at its end.

(The Micro-Bomb is an enigmatic device with the Cyrillic notation, "Patushkin Military Reservation." It has been tampered with and cannot be detonated.) Seven arms extend from the aft compartment – one of these was the one holding the rope from the junk. Both compartments are sealed from the rest of the ship and contain only the arm machinery. The arms are all 150' long, with joints every 30' for lateral fit into the compartment. The first, second, and fourth joints are locking upon extension; the third from the ship is the main use-joint. Arms 1-3 forward and 1-4 aft currently hold the sub in place on the lake bottom. The arms not in use are in retracted mode.

(1C) *Research Control.* Research Control is a saucer-like projection on the bottom of the hull. It is divided into six sections – each has wide windows covered with crash-protective metal plates (which can be slid back for an outward view; each section has its own controls) and a series of instrument consoles. Administrators may furnish as they desire. As for the specific sections: *Drill Control* supervises drilling experiments; *Cartography Control* makes computer-drawn maps of the ocean bottom (not currently functioning due to the bad water); *Biology Control* directs sealife research; *Geology Control* records seabottom samples; and *Arm Control* is the control center for the arms (including TV monitors connecting to cameras on each arm . . . but the camera on forward Arm 4 is out of order). In the center of the saucer is a spiral staircase leading up (sealable by a hatch in case of flooding).

(1D) *Dive Control.* This section supervises human diving parties. Seated at a table examining charts of seabottoms off Red China is an immensely fat Japanese lady in traditional costume, wearing an unplugged headset. This is a false Fat Man, the "Japanese Queen."

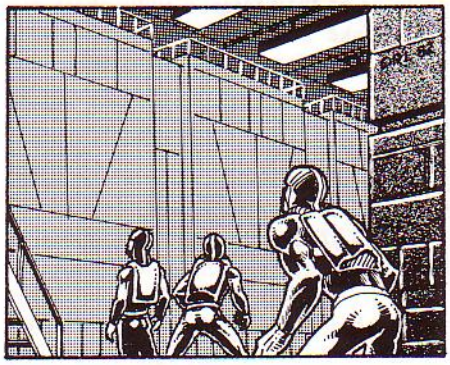
(1E) *Stowage.* This is a cargo area containing heavy engineering supplies – steel plate, valves, cartons of equipment, pipe. Entrance is by a 10' square hatch (closed but not locked) leading upward to Engineering; a ladder leads down from the hatch. An electric crane can hoist supplies. In the aft of the room, hidden behind several feet of cartons, is a clearing containing the Fat Man, Carter, four plastic chairs, and a 3' diameter green rubber disc on the floor.

Deck Two

(2A) *Pressure Lab.* This is a normal laboratory for high-pressure undersea research *except* that seated at a desk near the hatch is an immense (7' tall) black man wearing a leopard cape and gold lamé shorts. This is a false Fat Man, the "African Giant."

(2B) *Pressure Workroom.* Rooms 2A and 2B are the pressure center, and can be pressurized so that both top and bottom doors of the Pressure Tank can be opened without flooding the ship (so long as the airlock to the forward Diving Lock is closed). This room is set as a trap. The sliding double doors on top of the Tank are covered with a red carpet. On this carpet, at the juncture of the doors, is a desk. On top of the desk is a meter-square sheet of plastic film (the American Secret). When any character is at the desk, the sliding doors will open and any characters on the seam must make a die roll versus Coordination or fall in the Tank with the vasnacuri. Leaving the Tank also requires a die roll against Coordination.

(2C) *Forward Diving Lock.* Like rooms 2A and 2B, this room may be pressurized so that its hatch may be opened without flooding the ship. Thus, there are



airlocks to connect the lock to the rest of the ship when it is pressurized. This room contains drilling equipment, a crane, and a bathysphere.

(2D) *Aft Diving Lock.* There are three rooms here: the airlock, the diving lock (where the open hatchway is), and the divers' Ready Room. There is one diver in this room, sitting on a bench, armed with a speargun. These rooms are pressurized; therefore, characters must cycle through the airlock before entering the non-pressurized part of the ship.

(2E) *Engineering.* This mammoth room contains the engines which propel the ship. Power comes from the reactor, which is in this room but is controlled from another room. A 10' hatch in the floor, closed but not locked, leads to the Stowage on Deck One. Characters with AOK Industrial Engineering above 100 will be able to operate the engines, which will run only briefly before a "low power" shut-off will occur. The reactor is not running; a character with an AOK of Physics above 100 and Mechanical Engineering above 90 could commence its two-hour automated cold start procedure. Note this room is three stories tall; characters can look up at the Deck Three overhead Engineering section.

Deck Three

(3A) *Stores.* All "stores" are immense storage areas, mostly empty, containing conventional naval supplies – food, paint, spare parts, etc.

(3B) *Missile Room.* This room, three stories tall (and also accessible from Deck Five), is dominated by six missile silos containing sea-to-surface conventional missiles. Missiles cannot be launched without cooperation from Launch Control and Control Room; any character with AOK Computer Science above 100 can operate the launch controls. The hatch leading to Stores is locked from the inside of the Missile Room.

(3C) *Lab Stores.* This is an ordinary laboratory stores room, containing counters with cupboard space where lab samples are catalogued and stored, *except* that nine orangoutans are caged in the center of the room. A moaning sound also emanates from this room – Wing Pau, the Chinese acupuncturist, is tied up in one corner. When characters enter the room, the hatches will close and all lights will go out . . . and the orangoutans will be released, each armed with a .45 revolver (k). Orangoutans have a speed of 65, accuracy of 10% (of hitting a random character, including other orangoutans and Wing Pau), may use Untrained hand-to-hand attacks, and are +3 Life Level and +0 Damage on the ***Top Secret*** Animal Table. Lights and hatches will go on and be opened when the fight is over.

(3D) *Life Support Room.* From this room, any character with AOKs of Ecology/Earth Sciences or Engineering, Hydraulic above 100 may turn off fresh air for any (or all) ship decks. This cannot be stopped by the Fat Man.

(3E) *Strong Room.* This room has a distinctive black hatch, locked. If forced open, or if entered from the ceiling hatch, the room will contain two dozen .45 revolvers (k) and 50 magazines of standard ammunition for them.

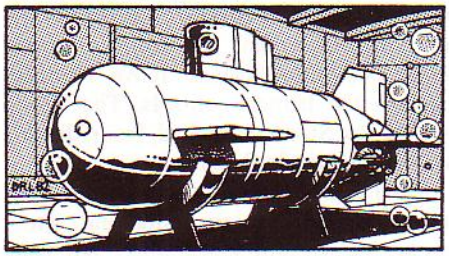
(3F) *Battery Room.* Any character with AOK Electrical Engineering above 100 may shut off power for the entire ship from here. The Fat Man cannot override this.

(3G) *Engineering.* See 2F. Note that on this deck there are railed walkways which look down on the first level of the room (from Deck Two). Stairs by the turbines lead to catwalks around the turbines shown on Deck Four; a ladder leads to a ceiling hatch.

Deck Four

(4A) *Torpedo Room.* Fires conventional torpedoes, has two firing tubes. Restrictions same as Missile Room, but requires a character with AOK Hydraulic Engineering above 100 to operate. Large floor hatch to Torpedo Storage.

(4B) *Hallway.* The "*" marks a 4' tall silvery box at one end of the hallway. The hall walls, ceiling, and floor are all of a shiny, reflective metal surface. When two or more player-characters have entered the hallway, five seconds later the top of the silver box will rise and a laser unit will pop out and commence firing.



The person targeted (whomever is closest to the laser) has a 50% chance of being hit. If he is hit, he takes three points of damage. If the beam misses, it will bounce all over the hallway until it hits something non-reflective. Roll d100. On a 01-10, the beam hits the furthest person from the laser; on an 11-20, the next furthest, and so on. If, for instance, there are five characters in the hall and a 63 is rolled, the beam ablates itself on a hatch or doorway. On a 96-00, the beam hits the laser projector, destroying it. The laser can withstand two points of damage; it fires once per turn, before any characters may fire.

(4C) *Mini Dock Lock.* The mini dock lock is also accessed by the giant double doors on the top of the sub. The lock is currently flooded with lake water and contains one mini-sub. Note that it is two stories in height. The hatches leading to Dock Control and the double hatch leading to Stores may only be opened when the lock is drained and pressurized.

(4D) *Control Room.* This is the command center of the ship – all equipment (arms, hatches, flood control, power, air) can be controlled from here. Control room permission is required before missiles and torpedoes may be fired. However, all controls may be overridden by a governor installed by the Fat Man, remote-controlled from his position in the Stowage area. Any character with AOK Electrical Engineering above 100 may locate this governor and trace its wiring to the Stowage on Deck One, but will be unable to remove it.

(4E) *Scientists Quarters.* All of these rooms are identical two-bunk cabins for the scientific staff. All are empty.

(4F) *Dock Control.* This room contains the controls to the main double doors and other dock lock doors.

Deck Five (Top)

(5A) *Chapel.* Unlike all other rooms, this room has a heavy black curtain hanging in its doorway. Inside this chapel, seated in a folding director's chair beneath a golden Buddha, is a suave elderly Englishman with a false handlebar mustache and the clothing of an Episcopal priest. He is a false Fat Man, the "Cleric."

(5B) *Crew Quarters.* This space contains 25 bunks, double-deckers. Each bunk contains an apparently-slumbering English female sailor. Unfortunately, two of these are only playing 'possum – they are Fat Man agents armed with dart guns (uu) loaded with sleeping darts, and will do their best to drug player-characters while no one is watching. When firing prone, their shots are treated as Called Shots (-50 accuracy) but strike random portions of their target's body; characters must make a die roll versus Evasion to notice who fired. The other sailors are under a sleeping drug and cannot be awakened within an 8-hour period.

(5C) *Navigations.* From this room are given all sailing orders. A hatch leads upwards to the Conning Tower.

(5D) *Officers' Quarters.* These are officers' quarters, identical to 4E.

(5E) *Captain's Cabin.* This is the captain's cabin, comfortably furnished with a coffee table, easy chair, aquarium, single bed . . . and a grossly fat man in white tropical clothes, with a Russian accent, sitting in the chair sipping from a cocktail. He is a false Fat Man, the "Cocktail Soviet."

Conning Tower

(CA) *Launch Center.* Any character with AOK Computer Science above 100 may program a missile target from here. In addition, firing of any missile or torpedo requires an OK from these controls (which any character can do).

(CB) *Radar.* Due to the state of the water, these controls are useless until the submarine surfaces or breaks into the open sea.

(CC) *Bridge.* This room, an auxiliary control room, contains a repeat of the important controls and instruments from Navigations and Control . . . *and* a dead man, holding a pistol (k) with which he has shot himself. He is a false Fat Man, known as the "Suicide Stiff." This room has windows, currently shuttered, which look out on the ocean, and a hatch to the conning tower deck which can be opened only when the sub is on the surface.

Special Rules:

• *Hatches.* All hatches are shown on the map, and indicated as opened or closed. Ceiling hatches are also always closed when found, and have a permanent ladder beneath them. Hatches may be controlled by the Control Room or the Fat Man, and may be locked or opened by remote control.

• *Leaks.* If the damage done to a single spot of a hull ever exceeds 15 points, a leak is caused in the hull. It is up to the Administrator's discretion how fast a leak will flood an area. If a leak is detected by the sub's interior pressure monitors, hatches leading to the afflicted area will be closed and locked by an automatic security system. The hatches will take one full turn to close and lock.

• *Intercoms.* Each room, each major instrument console, and each section of hallway contains an intercom station (speaker on wall, controls, microphone).

• *British Advantage.* Once the agents have boarded the submarine, the Administrator should find an excuse to take the British Senior Agent out of the room and brief him on the layout of the submarine. The agent may know the entire layout of the sub, not including locations of NPCs, hidden secrets, locked/unlocked hatches.

• *Moving the Sub.* It should become evident to the agents that the submarine was brought into the lake via the western river opening, back along the western river where it intersects another major river leading to the sea.

Part Three: The Fat Man's Trap

The truth of this adventure is not that the players are stalking the Fat Man . . . instead, he has deliberately tipped off the spy agencies in order to toy with their UNISTOMP Action Team! His goal? To *humiliate* the agents, to impress upon the world governments his capabilities.

The Fat Man is linked to hidden sensors all over the ship, and knows every action the characters take. His governor in the Control Room provides control of everything on the ship *except* a power or air shut-down at the source.

In addition, the Fat Man has four-man teams of human zombies under his command. The zombies, ethnic Chinese, have

been brainwashed so that they must obey every order from the Fat Man (via the intercom). They know no fear. Each carries a .45 revolver (k) and three magazines. In addition, each has an implant which the Fat Man can trigger . . . causing instant death, with blood flowing at the mouth and nose (making prisoners useless). A zombie team begins at the locations marked on the map, but may then be moved freely by the Administrator (Fat Man) via the intercoms.

The purpose of the zombies is to herd the characters into the traps of the ship, wound all of them (but not to kill them!) and to direct the characters to the five false Fat Men.

The false Fat Men are bizarre decoys set by the real Fat Man. Each has been brainwashed to believe that he is the *real* Fat Man, and will pridefully surrender to the players. However, each is also equipped with a special device (unknown to themselves) and a lethal implant, controlled by the real Fat Man.

The first Fat Man contacted by the characters will surrender, confess that he is the Fat Man, allow the characters to chain him, tie him, etc. . . . and then will detonate in a shower of blood (harmless to other characters). The Fat Man will then chuckle over the intercom system, "Fools . . . fools . . . fools . . ."

Once the first false Fat Man has detonated, the real Fat Man will continue to make snide remarks on the intercom system (see Table Two: Remarks, below). The Administrator must be careful to maintain his distance between himself and his Fat Man remarks.

The other false Fat Men, once the first has detonated, will act according to their personalities. Administrators are encouraged to role-play to the hilt. The false Fat Men:

"Suicide Stiff" (CC) is a dead body with the note, "You were too much for me, so I've ended it all. –Ignatius Flatt, The Fat Man." As players read this note, the body will mysteriously burst into flames. A voice on the intercom will cackle, "Wrong, wrong again." (If encountered as the first Fat Man, Stiff will obviously not be able to surrender since he is already – though recently – dead.)

"Japanese Queen" (1D) is a flamboyant transvestite (detectable to characters with AOK Medicine above 100, plus a 10% chance for all female characters) who will surrender pridefully. Unknown to him, the Fat Man has planted a flame thrower in each cup of the false brassiére (speed 60, accuracy 95%, range 3', limited to three shots). Although actually two flame throwers, treat as one weapon – it hits only one target; does regular damage. The

real Fat Man will activate these to injure any hitherto-undamaged character, or just to be showy.

"African Giant" (2A) is a mystical shaman. Hanging around his neck is a chain with a huge glassy gem in a thick setting. On cue from the real Fat Man, this gem will begin to blink (regardless of the condition of its wearer) and attempt to hypnotize all characters looking in its direction (4' range). A character must make a successful roll versus Willpower each turn he spends facing the gem, or become paralyzed. Once out of range of the gem, a character may make one roll versus Willpower every five minutes to come out of paralysis. A character left in the presence of the flashing gem for ten minutes must make a saving roll versus Willpower or become a zombie servant of the Fat Man.

"Cocktail Soviet" (5E) is a renegade KGB officer (30% chance of being known to any Soviet Senior Agent; 5% to any other character) with a wire running up his pants leg. Any character touching him, alive or dead, will receive 1d10-4 damage points from electrical shock. The Soviet is covered with a sprayed coating of a conductive agent. However, the coating is fragile – there is a 30% chance it will neutralize and become harmless after each shock.

Lastly, "Cleric" (5A) is an English churchman (10% chance of being known to any English agent) with nose plugs and a hand to his mouth (concealing a thin plastic tube connected to an air supply). His room is flooded with convulsionary gas (the heavy curtain keeps it within the room). Each character entering has a 5% chance of noticing an "almond" smell to the air.

The Administrator, acting for the Fat Man, should allow the false Fat Men to converse with the characters as long as it is "amusing" or until he has worked the characters into a good "shot" – and then trigger the surprise.

The Fat Man also has some liabilities:

Carter (1E) is a Pentagon traitor who is a maniac about Americans. After each fasle Fat Man is encountered, the Administrator should roll the die: There is a 30% chance that Carter will desert the Fat Man and go after the Americans. He is not armed – yet. Once he has left the Fat Man, Carter has no special information about characters' locations or abilities. If captured, he knows *everything* about the sub and the Fat Man's trap.

Wing Pau (3C), lying tied up on Deck Three, is very confused about all this. He has never seen the Fat Man and does not know his way around. However, he will tell any agent that (1) he was kidnapped to provide treatment for a beautiful young Caucasian girl, who has black, shoulder-length hair, a mental problem, and a bizarre biology; and (2) he can identify Simba, the African Master Spy.

On board the mini-sub are two more

Table Two: Remarks

Following are examples of the types of remarks the Fat Man will be making across the intercom system. The Administrator is by no means limited to these; the more, the better.

(To the American, if the American secret hasn't yet been discovered): "Looking at what's before me, I have to admire your attempts at stealth."

(In Russian): "Comrade, I consider your little toy quite a marvel. Which reminds me – please don't press *too* many buttons while you are aboard."

(When anyone is in the vicinity of 3C): "Look about carefully, gentlemen, and you'll find adversaries of your own kind. Do be careful."

(When in 4B): "My British ally, I hope you can appreciate my humble modifications to your vessel."

(After the Japanese Queen trap is sprung): "Not exactly a case of 'burning desire,' eh, my friends?"

There are a number of other audio nuisances the Fat Man can perform over the intercom; the sillier or more bizarre, the better. Musical cues are an obvious example: Attempts to rescue agents falling into the vasnacuri tank can be greeted with a chorus of "Octopus' Garden"; the first encounter with zombies could be fought to the strains of "Monster Mash"; anything to lend a sense of unreality to a normally straightforward moment is appropriate.

vital characters: Simba, the Fat Man's right-hand man and African Master Spy (known to Black Charlie), whose loss or capture will be horrendous for the Fat Man; and Sorra Lee, the Fat Man's beautiful 26-year-old daughter. Sorra Lee is apparently brain-damaged, and does not answer questions coherently or understand threats . . . but she does understand and will use her pistol (9mm FN Browning, e) if attacked. Simba himself carries a 9mm Luger (f) and an AKM assault rifle (x, 30 ammo), but will not use the AKM inside the mini-sub. Simba wears a khaki combat uniform, without identifying insignia, while Sorra Lee is in a sky-blue jumpsuit and boots. The Fat Man will do anything for Sorra Lee if she is captured or threatened, even if it means giving up his "game."

The Fat Man has informed Carter and Simba that he is an alien. He (as well as Simba, Sorra Lee, and Carter) use appropriately alien Travel Discs to move about the ship. Each travel disc is 3' in diameter, 1 inch thick, and looks like a rubber mat on the floor. There is one disc with each false Fat Man, one in the Stowage, and one on the mini-sub. They are transport portals, allowing the named characters to move instantaneously from one portal to any other. Player characters may not use them.

If things go satisfactorily, the Fat Man intends to materialize on the disc in the room with the last dying false Fat Man (he will try to do it when no one can see him materialize). He will then attempt to make the following speech. If he is interfered with and teleports out, the speech will be continued automatically via the intercom. Afterwards, the Fat Man will transport to the mini-sub, open the lock doors via his governor, and escape into the lake (while his governor closes and seals all exterior exits for ten minutes). If he has his ten minutes, there is no way to locate him – he has escaped.

The speech:

"Gentlemen, you haven't won.

"I have seen the cold fires of a thousand worlds, danced among the stars, glimpsed the mysteries of a universe you can only guess of. I am millions of your years old, and my intellect is ten times greater than yours.

"Puny humans, I bid you farewell. But I shall return."

If fired at, the Fat Man is defended by a force screen that can handle 20 damage points per turn. Excess damage points will wound the alien, causing him to seep brown liquid on the floor . . . he will then transport out. He probably will not be killed in this adventure.

Thus ends the adventure.

Final Points

For maximum diversity, the Administrator should pre-roll the NPCs himself prior to playing this adventure.

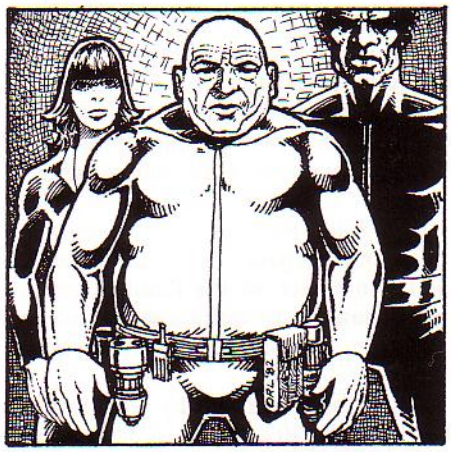
Ordinary, no bonuses: 19 junk crewmen, 6 zombie divers, 16 regular zombies, 5 false Fat Men, 2 zombie female sailors, 48 slumbering sailors, Wing Pau.

Ordinary, with bonuses: Black Charlie, Carter.

Same as Senior Agent: Simba.

Sorra Lee is rolled up as an ordinary character, without bonuses, except that her Charm is automatically 91 and her Knowledge is 0.

As for the Fat Man himself: Physical Strength 91, Charm 38, Willpower 56, Courage 89, Knowledge 178, Coordination 96, Offense 93, Deception 64, Evasion 68, Deactivation 137, Movement Value 243, Hand-to-Hand 159, Surprise 132, Life Level 40. Speaks all Terran languages.



As to what he looks like . . . he is enormously fat, bald, appears a trifle Chinese by complexion, and is dressed in a bright green jumpsuit with gadgets hanging from his belt. He is unarmed.

Thoughts for the Administrator: Good luck running this adventure! I've done my best to nail down any major loopholes, but with an adventure of this scope, there are improbable problems (someone hurling a grenade at the reactor, or using a torpedo as a battering ram) I've not covered. If one of these turns up, don't be afraid to improvise. As for the structure of this scenario, it is designed to be easy at first (luring players to lower their guard) and then exasperating (but not super-lethal!). The object is to wound, injure, and frustrate the characters, but not necessarily to kill them. However, use your discretion to increase or decrease the danger as your players require – either in your capacity as Administrator (by altering the adventure) or as the Fat Man (by beefing up or pulling your punches). The zombie squads are best used as blocking forces, in good cover, preventing the players from travelling in the direction they choose – the zombies, although not super-characters, should prove suitably lethal in the short ranges. On the other hand, don't cry when the players shoot them away – that's what they are there for. (In fact, if the players are having a tough time, you might have the zombies stage a "charge" to allow characters to kill them more easily.)

Evaluating victory (and experience points, if the players want to continue these characters) is between you and the players, but you should remember to reward success in preserving a secret, to penalize exposure of a double agent, and to reward those enough on the ball to bring back samples of the Travel Discs or the "blood" of the Fat Man. Prisoners are also valuable, particularly Simba (to all agents) and Carter (particularly for the Americans).

Aftermath and Sequels

Assuming that the adventure ends pretty much as the Fat Man has attempted to arrange it – with the submarine and the government secrets recaptured, but with the Fat Man and his daughter and lieutenant escaped – the door is thrown wide open to the unusual repercussions and sequels.

Captured with the submarine will be six travel discs. Whether or not their technology can be understood could bring about a host of new adventures, especially depending upon who ended up with the discs.

And was the Fat Man really an alien? If so, what are his plans? So far he's acted primarily to frighten and alarm the major government powers of the world. If he plans to further his demands for unilateral disarmament of the world – or to pursue other, more sinister goals – it could provide for a fascinating rematch between the Fat Man and the agents who opposed him before.

In any case, if the Administrator decides to continue this adventure – in effect, to start a full-fledged, obnoxious "camp" spy campaign – he'll find plenty of material to work with in the Fat Man.

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METAL

by John Rankin

The British Are Coming

Modern miniatures gaming is to a great extent a gift from our friends across the water. Toy soldiers have been popular in Europe for well over a century and a half. The first set of miniatures wargaming rules was published in England (*Little Wars*, H.G. Wells, 1913), and, with the exception of a few American pioneers like Jack Scruby, the present hobby was developed by Englishmen in the 1950s. Legendary founders of the hobby such as Don Featherstone and Charles Grant produced some of the first 25mm figures with crude, homemade molds and lead melted on the kitchen stove.

In the '60s the British toy company, Airfix, began manufacturing an extensive line of 20mm soft plastic figures. Most sets were World War II, but also available were ancients, medievals, and Napoleonics. While the poses available were limited (extensive conversion work solved this problem for many gamers), distribution in the U.K. and U.S. was widespread. In fact, many of the first commercially-available lead figure lines were designed to plug gaps in the Airfix series.

Miniatures gaming began to come of age in this country during the early '70s when the two largest British manufacturers, Hinchliffe and Miniature Figures, set up licensed operations here. The first homegrown companies commenced operations and miniatures wargaming began, in a small way, to flourish in the U.S.

Then the fantasy hit the fan. The phenomenal success of TSR's ***D&D*** propelled the American miniatures industry into the mainstream hobby market, as it supplied "adventure gaming" figures to millions of new gamers. What had previously been an enthusiast market several thousand strong (and almost totally historically-oriented) was now big business. This market was affected by typical Yankee ingenuity: beautiful packaging, efficient distribution networks, advertising, and extremely high creative and production standards. Today the industry in this country is large, prosperous, and dominated by production of fantasy figures.

The British scene today is profoundly different from our own. The vast majority of figures here are sold to distributors at a 60% discount off retail price and are then sold to retailers at 40% off. In England, there are virtually no large distributors and the 60% or so of figures sold to retailers go for a maximum 35% discount. The other 40% of British production is sold at retail price through direct mail order – compared to perhaps 1% by a U.S. company like Ral Partha. In business terms, this means a higher profit margin for U.K. companies and correspondingly lower prices to U.K. customers.

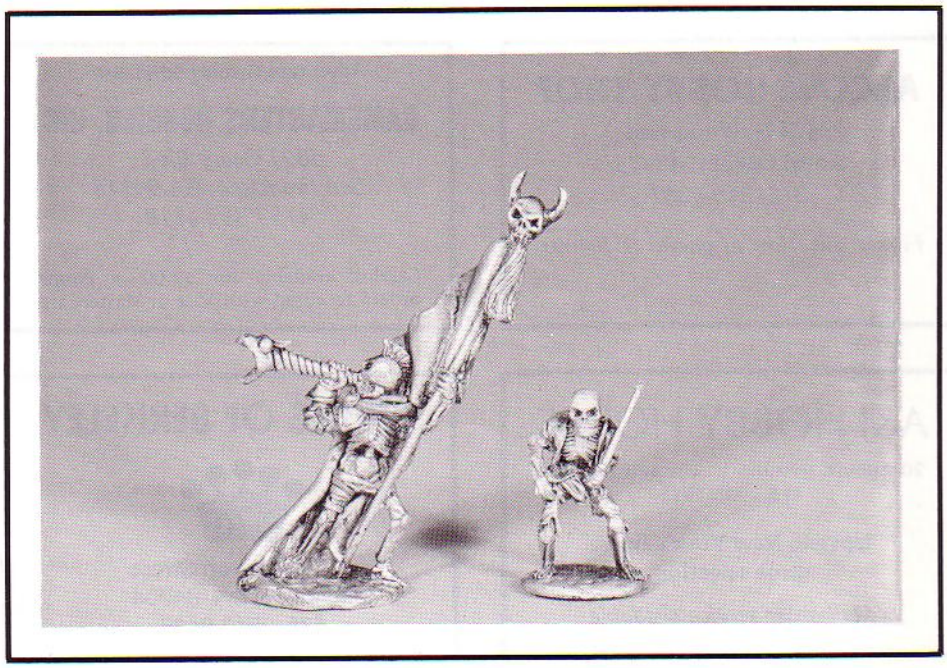
These economic factors make the English companies much more diverse and in some ways more stable than their American counterparts. Cottage industry is still a viable way of life over there, and there are literally scores of one-man operations producing some of the field's most obscure historical figures and most bizarre fantasy and science fiction miniatures.

Because few British companies are geared to American marketing practices, many fine lines are available only by mail order (which is expensive and can take a *very* long time) or through perhaps one buff-market hobby shop or distributor. (The Armory importing Asgard is a good example.) The mass market here hardly knows they exist. On the other hand, figures manufactured here and shipped to England are, due to higher labor, packaging, and shipping costs, exhorbitantly expensive over there.

The solution to this problem is, fortunately, very simple. One licenses a company on the other side of the pond to produce its figures within the framework of its own market. A royalty is the most common form of payment for this privilege. But if both companies *trade* licenses for their respective lines, then a truly cooperative venture can be set up. A recent example, one which should be greatly appreciated on both sides of the Atlantic, is that between Ral Partha and

Citadel Miniatures U.S.

In the U.K., Citadel enjoys much the same reputation for high quality, innovation, and design excellence that Ral Partha does here. This marriage-made-in-metal-heaven seems to be working beauti-



fully. Citadel U.S. has a small full-time staff (headed by Bryan Sowder and Brian "Huggy Bear" Hitsman) which handles production, packaging, and shipping. Marketing, administration, and other services are provided by Ral Partha.

Figures are sculpted by Michael Perry, Alan Perry, Bryan Ansell (one of Britain's best known designers), Humphrey Leadbitter, C. Brad Gorby, and (who else?) Tom Meier. Quality control is excellent, and design ranges from good in some of the early models to extraordinary in many current offerings. Like Ral Partha, Citadel constantly redesigns older figures to bring them up to current standards. The Citadel line is varied and extensive.

For science fiction gamers, Citadel offers *Starcruisers*, highly detailed little spacecraft most notable for the "organic" designs of some of the alien races. To be released in early '83 are *Spacefarers*, 25mm figures featuring such unusual types as street rebel on "chopper" jet cycle, star pirates, law officers, and "six gun" attack droids.

Fantasy gamers have a plethora of types to choose from. The *Medieval* and *Dark Ages* lines, while historical, are extremely useful as fantasy adventurers due to a unique process which allows the same figure to be manufactured in up to 20 different versions with different faces, helmets, shields, weapons, etc. Thus a line supposedly sporting 30 or 40 figures actually contains hundreds of different ones.

This same process is now being used on some of the figures in Citadel's superlative *Fantasy Tribes*, such as Skeletons (15 basic types) and Orcs (13 basic types). The dwarves in this line are absolutely the finest I've ever seen, both in detail and overall feel, and the line in general is as beautiful as anything available. The *Fiend Factory* line includes 70 assorted monsters, while the *Fantasy Adventurers* offers 33 characters with two basic versions of each: on foot *and* mounted. *Fantasy Specials* has accessories, NPCs (many with humorous features – "grumpy old boozer," "village idiot," etc.), and an extensive range of Naked Girls. Rounding out these offerings is the *Weird Fantasy* line, just in case you need a Spaced-out Druid or that most dreaded of all encounters: the Vorpal Kitty.

One last note – Citadel's figures are highly compatible in size with Ral Partha's. That certainly increases the value and usefulness of an already excellent line.

Next month – A look at one of the industry's best kept secrets . . . Superior Models.

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WHERE WE'RE GOING

Okay. This month, I *do* have a few things to say. For openers . . . thank you, everyone who sent in the mini-feedback from the TSG 55 mailer cover. The numbers have gone through the computer, and are very interesting; the comments have gone through Aaron and me, and are more interesting still.

Based on the feedback data, we will be fine-tuning the content a little bit. No big changes were called for (thanks again!). But we see some room for improvement. For instance . . .

To nobody's surprise, reviews (both feature and capsule) continue to rate very high. The only complaint about reviews, on the whole, is that they are sometimes not timely enough. We can help that by giving them a little more space in some issues; there's no reason a review should sit around the office after it's accepted. Some of that extra room can come from the **LARGER ISSUES** that we've been getting. Some of it will come from the pages devoted to the monthly contest. We're not canning contests entirely; we like them, and so do a lot of you readers. But it's not easy to come up with a good contest idea every single month. We're going bi-monthly on the contest; the extra space will go to capsule reviews.

Comments on the "game or scenario in every issue" policy were mixed. A few of you don't like the idea at all. A lot of you do like it. A lot more say "it's a good idea, but can you keep up the quality?" Several readers pointed out the fate of past magazines (i.e., *S&T, Ares*) that attempted a game in every issue. All we can say is – give us a while. We're aware of the risks involved. We think we can avoid the "half-baked turkey in every issue" trap. If we can't keep up good material – we'll stop *fast.* Allen Varney's ***Necromancer,*** in issue 55, rated a 7.06 – not quite up there with the reviews, but pretty solid all the same. (Next time we *will* use heavier cardboard for the bind-in counters!)

We will continue to publish as many good variants and strategy articles as we can get. That's the hardest kind of material to find. Write some for us!

And, in response to a large number of queries, I am very pleased to announce:

The Return of Murphy's Rules

We lost our cartoon feature, *Murphy's Rules,* when Richard Mather ran out of time to draw it. For months, we've been looking for a new cartoonist. We've found him. Boy, oh boy . . . *have* we found him.

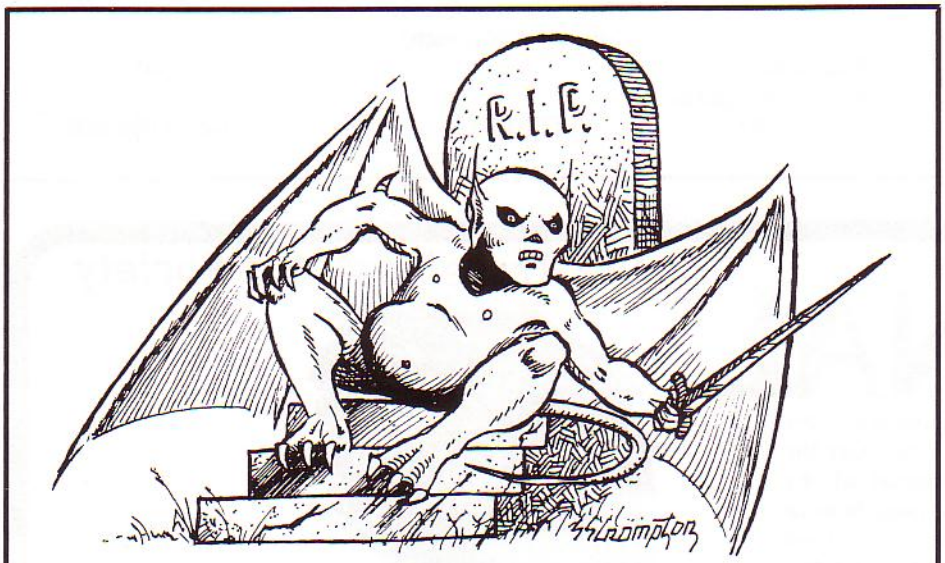
Ben Sargent is the Pulitzer-winning editorial cartoonist for the *Austin American-Statesman.* He is also an old-line Avalon Hill-type wargamer; in fact, he and his wife have designed a turn-of-the-century railroad game with a good deal of real business and historical simulation! And – starting next month – Ben is going to be drawing *Murphy's Rules.* Watch for it.

In general, readers seem to appreciate the extra effort we've been putting into art (both cover and interior) and on the mailer cartoons. I have three items relating to that.

(1) Usually, when we buy a cover painting, we buy all rights plus original. This issue, though, we only bought the rights. Denis Loubet is keeping the original. But he's willing to sell it . . . If you're interested in owning an original Loubet, send your bid to Denis c/o this magazine. His minimum bid is $200.

(2) We have two new posters available. They will retail for $1.00 apiece (same as the new price of the Demon poster). One is the ***Iron Men*** cover from issue 43 (15" x 22"). The other is the cover art from ***Illuminati*** (13" x 22"). They're both really good-looking (actually, they were designed as sales aids for stores). Note, though: any poster you buy from us *will* come folded to fit an 8½ x 11" envelope. Flat ones require mailing tubes, which are horrendously costly.

(3) We recently received a letter from the attorneys for TSR. It seems they feel



NEXT ISSUE

January's TSG will contain healthy helpings of:

"IRON MEN," man-to-man combat from the world of OGRE, by Steve Jackson;

The 1982 Game Survey (yep, it's that time again!)

"GRAV ARMOR +3," new scenarios for Dwarfstar's tactical armor game of the far future;

William A. Barton reviewing THE TRAVELLER BOOK;

The return of "Murphy's Rules";

The 1982 Origins ballot (yep, it's also THAT time again);

A featured review of SSI's Rapidfire line; and

The Post Office. (You can't escape it; it knows where you live.)

that the mailer cover cartoons for issue 49 ("Beauty is in the eye of the Beholder") and issue 53 (Frontal Bolotomi) infringe their "trademark and other proprietary rights." I really cannot think of an appropriate comment on that, so I'll just end the report and change the subject . . .

Car Wars Strikes Again

Now I have some *good* news. We were recently informed that *Omni* magazine has selected ***Car Wars*** as one of its Ten Best Games of the Year. The only other wargame (excuse me, "adventure game") so honored this year was Avalon Hill's ***Civilization.*** Which, by the way, I also recommend – it's long, but good.

Car Wars is continuing to grow in popularity – which is why this issue is dedicated to CW material. However, we can't turn TSG into a ***Car Wars*** house organ. So we're starting a new magazine that *will* be a house organ. *Autoduel Quarterly* will be a digest-sized magazine appearing four times a year. It will feature ***Car Wars*** variants, vehicles, arenas, future history, maps, scenarios, and adventures. It will look and read a lot like the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society.* That is no coincidence. The JTAS is a truly excellent service to ***Traveller*** players; it's attractive but not super-fancy, and comes out just often enough to serve the need for new material. ***Car Wars*** needs something similar, and we're following the best model we have.

The first issue of ADQ will appear in late January or early February of 1983. It may or may not be available in stores; we haven't made up our minds. It *will* be available by subscription; subscriptions will be $10.00 per year (four issues). We will also use the ADQ mailing list for ***Car Wars*** announcements – i.e., if we ever get the idea of a national ***Car Wars*** tournament off the ground . . .

Next Year's Releases

The current set of spring releases looks like this:

(1) ***Iron Men.*** The game for the January issue of TSG will appear in boxed form shortly after the magazine comes out. This is an experiment . . .

(2) ***Illuminati Expansion Sets*** 1 and 2. These are in final playtest right now; the cover art is finished and looks incredible.

(3) ***Necromancer.*** It did well enough in the ratings that we're going to give it a go in Pocket Box form.

(4) Another ***Car Wars*** supplement – the working title is still ***Truck Stop.***

– Steve Jackson

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Dr. Joyce Brothers Becomes TSR Consultant

Dr. Joyce Brothers, a psychologist who has become nationally known through the communications media, has been engaged as a consultant by TSR Hobbies, Inc.

Dieter Sturm, public relations director for TSR, reports that "she'll be doing an 18-city tour within the next year. She's going to be promoting not only ***Dungeons & Dragons*** and TSR products but actively campaigning for role-playing products. [Psychologists] do use role-playing techniques in their work," Sturm explained. "She feels that there's great value in cooperation and interaction between the players."

Sturm continued, "She turns down several hundred company tie-ins in a year, but has accepted the value of role-playing games." Industry observers opine that TSR may hope that some of ***D&D***'s more vocal opponents will also "accept the value" when exposed to the endorsement of a widely-known psychologist.

New & Upcoming Releases

Germany 1985 is the first game in a series of four World War III computer games from Strategic Simulations, Inc. Soviet battalions have invaded the southern center of West Germany, and NATO must step in to halt them. The game includes a solitaire option in which the computer can play either side. Available for the Apple II (48K, Applesoft in ROM), Apple II Plus, and Apple III, it retails for $59.95 and includes diskette, two-sided map, data card, and rulebook.

A science fiction computer gaming system, ***EMPIRE II: Interstellar Sharks,*** has been released by Interactive Fantasies. Accompanied by a player's manual and a soft-cover novella, the game retails for $32.95 and is playable on the Apple with Applesoft.

The Amulet of Dreams is the second adventure for play on ***Questgrid 1*** in the ***Questers*** system. Produced by L.F. Enterprises, it sells for $5.50. ***Questgrid 2*** and two adventures for play on that grid will be available in early 1983.

EON Products has announced the release of Expansion Set 8 for ***Cosmic Encounter.*** It sells for $6 and contains Flare cards for Sets 6 and 7, as well as new Challenge and Edict cards. Expansion Set 2 for ***Borderlands*** will be released in February, 1983, and will add a sixth player to the ***Borderlands*** game, as well as Universities, Monasteries, and Blimps. The set will retail for $5.

Armor Assault, by EPYX/Automated Simulations, is a tactical-level game for the Atari 400/800 (40K with joystick). It simulates tank warfare in WWIII between NATO and the Soviet Union in a variety of scenarios from the Rhine to Afghanistan, and sells for $39.95. Two other EPYX games, ***Crush, Crumble & Chomp!*** and ***Rescue at Rigel*** are now available on cassette for the VIC-20 personal computer; each game retails for $29.95.

Adventure Games is working on a Civil War military miniatures game for 10 or 15mm figures. The game, called ***Johnny Reb,*** was designed by John Hill of ***Squad Leader*** and ***Cross of Iron*** fame, and had originally been sold to Heritage. Adventure Games has since acquired the rights to both the game and the trademarked name "Johnny Reb"; the Basic Package is expected to be released in late January and will contain a 98-page rulebook, two tri-fold reference charts, six scenarios, and an assortment of playing aids. A separate scenario pack containing twelve additional scenarios will also be released at that time. ***Johnny Reb*** figures will be produced by Martian Metals, and will be sold separately.

Hayden Software has released ***Shuttle Intercept,*** an arcade game for the Apple II (disk, Applesoft, 48K), in which the player's spacecraft is directed to retrieve friendly satellites bearing vital data and must fight or avoid enemy craft, satellites, missiles, and meteors. It sells for $34.95.

Möbius Games is the new adventure gaming division of Carver Corporation (Scottsdale, AZ). The division is headed by John Carver, formerly of Flying Buffalo, Inc., and will concentrate its initial efforts on fully computer-moderated play-by-mail games. Möbius Games' first scheduled release is slated for January 1983; it will be a science fiction game incorporating grand strategy and role-playing on a system-wide level.

Convention Calendar

January 14-16: CHATTACON 8. SF con. For information, send SASE to ChattaCon 8, P.O. Box 921, Hixson TN 37343.

January 22-23: WINTER CAMPAIGN II. RPGs, boardgames, Napoleonics. Contact Winter Campaign, P.O. Box 14630, University Station, Minneapolis, MN 55414-0630.

February 11-13: NORCON '83. Gaming con. For information, contact NorCon 83, 320 Caledonia Avenue, Dorval, Quebec H9S 2Y2.

*February 11-13: WARCON IX. For information, write Texas A&M University, MSC Recreation, P.O. Box J-1, College Station, TX 77844.

February 26-27: GAME FAIRE. RPGs, microarmor, chess, arcade games, etc. For information, contact Shannon Ahern, Book and Game Company, West 621 Mallon, Spokane, WA 99201 or 509/325-3358.

*March 4-6: MICRO-CON '83. SF and gaming con. Contact Micro-Con '83, 601 River Road No. 604, San Marcos, TX 78666.

March 5-6: CENTCON I. ***Squad Leader, D&D, Backgammon, Risk, Kingmaker, Top Secret,*** etc. Contact CentCon I, 471 Commonwealth Avenue, New Britain, CT 06053.

*March 24-27: AGGIECON. SF con. Contact Cepheid Variable, P.O. Box J-1, College Station, TX 77844.

March 25-27: FANTASYLAIR '83. Gaming and SF con. For information contact Northern Oklahoma Dungeoneers, P.O. Box 241, Ponca City, OK 74602.

March 26-27: NOVA 8. Gaming and SF con. Contact The Order of Leibowitz, Oakland University, Rochester, MI 48063.

April 22-24: CONTRETEMPS 2. Gaming and SF con. Send SASE to Contretemps, P.O. Box 12422, Omaha, NE 68112.

May 27-29: SWAMPCON-4. SF con. Send SASE to BRSFL-SwampCon, P.O. Box 14238, Baton Rouge, LA 70898.

June 10-12: X-CON 7. SF and gaming con. For information, contact X-Con, P.O. Box 7, Milwaukee, WI 53201-0007.

*July 14-17: ORIGINS '83. Adventure gaming con. Contact MDG, Box 656, Wyandotte, MI 48192.

July 15-17: OKON '83 / FILKCON EAST '83. SF cons. Send SASE to P.O. Box 4229, Tulsa, OK 74104.

SJ GAMES and TSG will be attending the conventions marked above with asterisks.

News Briefs

EON and SJ Games Gather Kudos

Four of EON Products' 1982 releases have appeared on *Games Magazine*'s "Games 100" best games of the year list. Games on the 1982 list are ***Cosmic Encounter, Darkover, Runes,*** and ***Borderlands. Quirks*** was selected last year, and ***Cosmic Encounter*** was voted the Best Science Fiction Boardgame in London's 1982 Games Day balloting.

Car Wars has been selected by *Omni* magazine as one of the 10 best games of 1982, and ***Illuminati*** was a runner-up on the same list. The "Best Games" list will appear in the December 1982 issue of *Omni.*

***People* Views Lord British**

Richard Garriott (Lord British), designer/programmer of ***Akalabeth, Ultima,*** and ***Ultima II,*** was the subject of a full-page article in a recent issue of *People* magazine. According to *People,* Garriott's royalty income is now in six figures, and he "puts most of his loot into real estate, money market funds and IRA and Keogh accounts." The son of astronaut Owen Garriott, Richard would also like to go into space someday.

Next on the Licensing Parade: *D&D* Dolls

Jack Friedman, president of LJN Toys of New York, has reportedly paid TSR some $4 million for a three-year license to produce two dozen different ***Dungeons & Dragons*** dolls. LJN currently holds the license to produce *E.T.* toys; the company's first big success was a Brooke Shields doll.

***Monopoly* Loses Trademark**

The ***Monopoly*** boardgame trademark was recently ruled invalid by a federal appeals court, who judged the word to be a generic term. The ruling went against Parker Brothers and its parent company, General Mills, in favor of Ralph Anspach, professor of economics at San Francisco State University. Anspach has fought more than nine years for the right to sell his game, which is called ***Anti-Monopoly.***

Jaquet to Publish *Gameplay* Magazine

Jake Jaquet, former head of Dragon Publishing, will become the publisher of *Gameplay* magazine, a magazine aimed at the general gaming market.

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PBM Update

PBM Update reports on professionally-moderated play-by-mail games. Notices are monthly. Copy deadline is 60 days previous to the first of the month, for the issue in which the notice is to appear. (Deadline for the March issue is January 1.) All copy should be typed and double-spaced. Notices should not exceed 200 words in length. TSG reserves the right to edit copy as necessary.

★★★

Schubel & Son

The Tribes of Crane:

Crane I: Eylon has returned to the polar city of Mada and has slain his treacherous successor Borin Trulthson. Eylon, with the aid of the Eylas People and his old friend City General Wark, was able to secretly enter Mada and storm Borin's palace. Borin had many powerful friends, however, and they have been rushing north to retake Mada and slay Eylon. Recent weeks have seen several clashes between Eylon's forces and those loyal to Borin.

Crane II: The Celtani Federation/Halton Factor wars appear to be at an end. With the fall of Rawan and Ura, C.F. strength in the Middle Sea area has been crushed. Along with these defeats and the resignation of the C.F. leadership, the death of the Defense Coordinator (at the siege of Ura) and the mass defections plaguing the alliance, the C.F. appears to be at its end. Rumors, however, suggest that there may be a surviving C.F. Kingdom located, and as yet undiscovered by the Halton Factor, somewhere in the east.

Star Venture:

We have just witnessed the first full scale attack and subsequent capture of a colony. The colony, Stockholm, is located in the Thebes star system and is primarily a fuel production center with minor raw material and production capabilities. Stockholm was apparently well defended by a dozen Planetary Fighting Vehicles (PFV's), several Forts and over 500 colonists, troops and aliens. The attacks began in late August and continued until the middle of September when the colony finally fell. The attacks consisted of alternating assaults by the Conoco's Commandos and Mobil's Marauders, one force attacking while the other rearmed and regrouped. Several other attacks on colonies are presently underway and ship battles continue.

StarMaster:

NorthEast Galaxy: Representatives of the Kingdom of Thalosia have announced the declaration of a ceasefire between the Polysentient Council and the Imperial Empire (of which the Kingdom of Thalosia is a member). The declaration appears to end the fighting between these two powerful organizations (members of which

range between 3rd and 6th Generation). This tenuous ceasefire is welcome relief to many NE races, as the fighting has ravaged dozens of star systems, including several uninvolved races. The ceasefire appears to be only temporary, however, as both sides have aggressively recruited new races, begun massive reconstruction of their star fleets and participated in an increasing number of 'border incidents.' Elsewhere, fighting continues.

Duane Wilcoxson

Clemens & Associates

Company News: We are still playtesting ***Terra II*** to enable us to make adjustments prior to releasing the game.

Quadrant I: Rumors of more Terran attacks on Etuel systems may force the Etuel into mutual defense pacts that will limit access to trade centers.

Quadrant II: Colonization of the outer areas is proceeding very rapidly. Many industrial centers have developed.

Quadrant III: More clashes have occurred between ships of various alliances as boundaries are being tested.

Quadrant IV: Several alliances have made Hydra their home port. Their colonies are well developed and protected by strong fleets.

Regajian Empire: The relief force to retake our Quad IV bases is gathering near the portal while other battle groups patrol the borders of our empire.

Ixtli Empire: The expansion of our forces in Quad II is increasing rapidly. Security systems are well established.

Muar Empire: Negotiations with a major Terran alliance are almost complete. Soon our forces will outnumber any single alliance.

Jon Clemens

Game Systems Inc.

Game 1: The first conclave of armies took place in the northern forests of Earthwood. It is rumored that many different races met to discuss the upcoming campaign for victory.

Game 2: Rumors persist that a player alliance is close to victory in this game. A mighty Wizard continues to research his arcane arts while armies continue to recruit large numbers of NPCs.

Game 3: The fame of the King of the Gnomes continues to spread as his eloquent diplomats recruit race after race of NPC warriors. Great undead armies of the Necromancer have laid siege to an ancient city.

Game 4: Tales from the Spies' Guild reveal that the Rangers have attempted to infiltrate the ancient city of Keep – a citadel run by the infamous Wizards' Council. The Wizard has been seen leading massive dragon armies across the central plains.

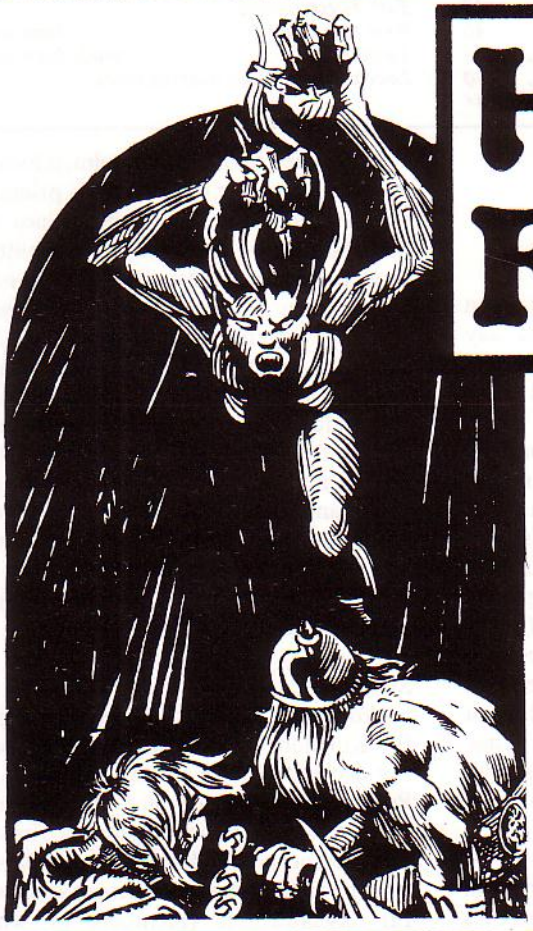
Game 5: A massive war fleet is nearing completion as shipbuilders are recruited from near and far by the King of the Anorocians. There are as yet no rumors against whom this mighty fleet will be sent.

Game 6: The Unicorn Alliance, boasting of more than seven cities under control, has crossed the borders and is on the verge of conflict (or alliance?) with the new and growing empire ruled by the Mammoth Men and their allies.

Game 7: The Stardom Alliance continues to cause controversy as new races are forced to choose between them and their enemies. The Alliance claims to control over half of the cities of Earthwood, yet tales continue to spread about enemy attacks at the very core of the Alliance Empire.

Game 8: An invasion of giant rats, followed by a devastating earthquake, has brought the Ranger race to its knees. It will be many years before they are expected to rise to prominence again. Spies are seeing extensive duty in this game – especially around the city of Escobar where enemy troops have begun to assemble.

Pete Stassun
Bill Field, Jr.



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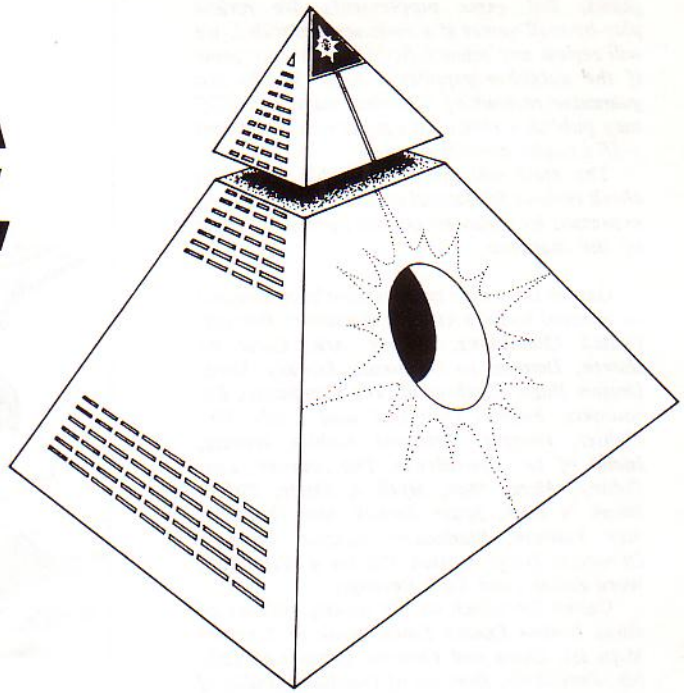
STAR VENTURE



As your fleet of two destroyers, a cruiser, a tanker and a troop transport moved into orbit around the planet Omega in the Polaris system, the first blasts of lethal energy flashed from the forts of the colony below. Already your allies have landed troops and alien warriors on the other side of the planet. Very soon the heavy planetary fighting vehicles of their ground forces will engage the enemy's colony defenses. You begin to fire your beam weapons, holding your missiles and powerful fighters until just the right moment. The message is received; your allies have begun the attack. You launch your missiles and fighters and start your transport toward the surface and with it you launch into another Star Venture . . .

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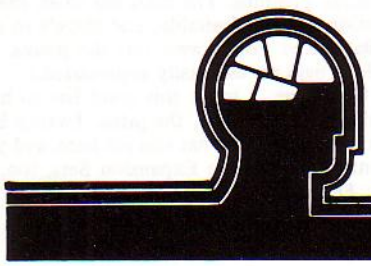

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The staff will make reasonable efforts to check reviews for factual accuracy, but opinions expressed by reviewers are not necessarily those of the magazine.

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Games for which we are seeking reviews include ***Behind Enemy Lines, Book of Treasure Maps III, Caves and Caverns, Corsairs of Tallibar, Daredevils, Demons of Dundurn, Druids of Doom, Galaxy, Gangster, Helltank Destroyer, Heroes and Villains, Kamakura,*** *Nexus,* ***Pirates of Hagrost, Prison Planet, Questers, Runes, Shield Maidens of Sea Rune, SoloQuest II, Star Maze, Star Smuggler, Starfleet Voyages, Starsilver Trek, Tome of Mighty Magic, Trollpack, Voyager I, Warrior, Witches Court Marshes,*** and ***Wondrous Weapons.***

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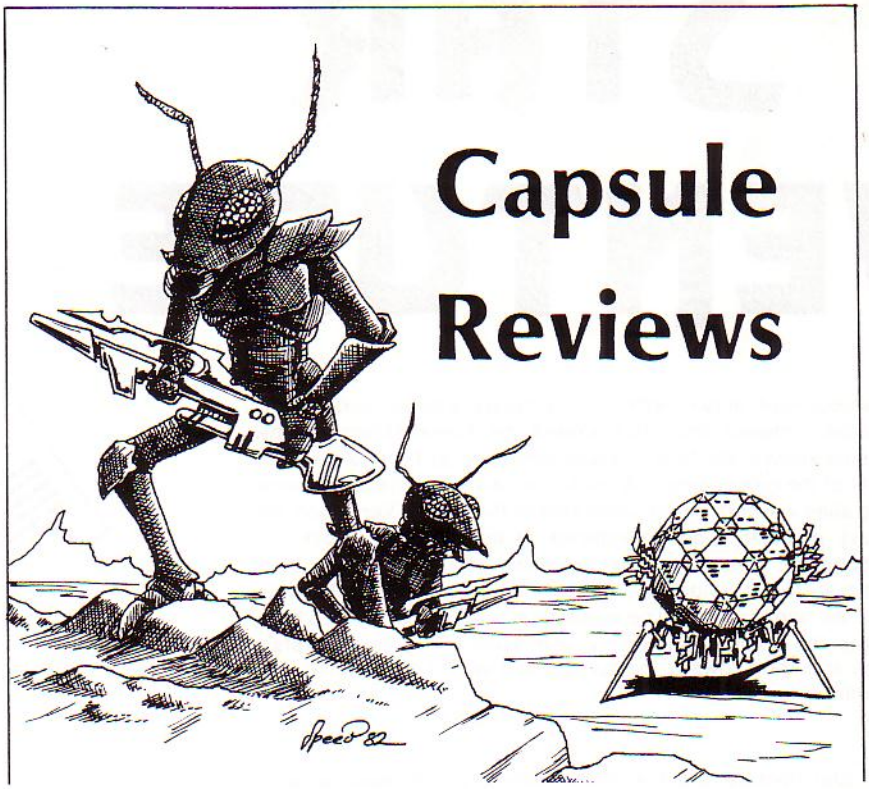

Capsule Reviews

ALMA MATER (Oracle Press); $9.98. Designed by Steve Davis and Andrew Warden. 48-page rulebook and separate character sheet. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1982.

An unusual title, especially as a first release from a new company, ALMA MATER is the first game to explore the possibilities of a topic familiar to nearly everyone in the gaming hobby: high school. In ALMA MATER, the players begin as freshmen and proceed through four or more years of secondary education, presumably raising as much hell and getting in as much trouble as humanly possible. The interest in the game lies in the players' ability to assume the role of a "student" unlike themselves, doing things that respect for authority, fear of retribution, or personal inhibitions prevented during their own high school careers.

As ludicrous as the game sounds, the rule system is amazingly coherent. Rules for attributes skills, encounters, and social situations are relatively complete and accurately simulate many aspects of high school life. Eight pages are devoted to tables and rules concerning encounters and reactions. Combat is only a minor part of the game, with interaction between players and NPCs taking a more significant role in play. Still, four pages are devoted to a combat system including slingshots, spitballs, and wet towels, as well as more conventional axes, guns, and fists.

The only major problem with the game system is that it relies heavily on tables and die rolls, limiting the players' and referee's freedom for role-playing. A few typos crept into the rulebook. The biggest problem with the game as a whole, though, is that real-life high school is incredibly boring. Players begin to lose interest after the first couple of football games or parties. To remedy this, the referee finds himself doing one of two things: trashing the campaign or introducing unusual situations or characters, ranging from merely unbelievable to incredibly perverse. The game quickly devolves into *Monsters! Monsters!* in blue jeans.

Despite the fact that ALMA MATER is built on a workable and innovative set of rules, its subject matter is likely to prevent most campaigns from lasting more than a session or two. We should, however, be on the lookout for quality releases from Oracle; the company possesses some real design talent.

– J. David George

BORDERLANDS (Eon Products); $20. Designed by Future Pastimes (Jack Kittredge, Peter Olotka, Bill Eberle). 8-page rulebook, 20" x 24" map, 240 tokens, eight ziplock counter bags, one die in the standard Eon box. Two to four players; playing time 2-3 hours. Expansion sets available. Published 1982. (Do not confuse with ***RuneQuest Borderlands.***)

Styled as "a game of the barbaric future," this is actually a highly-abstract contest of territorial conquest and diplomacy, independent of any "real" future history. 16 "production sites" are placed among the 36 territories of the map, and players seize, trade, and develop the resources these produce (gold, iron, coal, timber, horses). Cities, boats, and weapons can be produced; the first player(s) to build and/or capture three cities establishes a civilization and wins the game. Strategy and negotiation are essential.

The goal here was to give players the "feel" of ***Diplomacy,*** but with fewer players and no written commands. In ***Borderlands,*** Eon has succeeded, brilliantly. You would expect the designers of ***Cosmic Encounter*** to produce another highly social, fun, and intensely involving game – but who could have predicted this teeth-gritting, nail-biting, *merciless* conflict of wills? The variable locations of the resource sites make your objectives in each game different, yet every game calls for fast talking and *intricate* planning. The rules are clear, the production values admirable, and there's so much replay value you'll wear out the pieces. (The ziplock bags are especially appreciated.)

Of course, a game this good has to have a problem; in this case, the price. Twenty bucks is a lot to pay for what you get here, and you'll eventually want the Expansion Sets, too. ***Cosmic Encounter*** is definitely a better buy. Still,

if you've worn out your ***CE*** game and want more, ***Borderlands*** is another one that will give you your money's worth.

If you like ***Diplomacy***, but you've always had trouble getting that fifth or sixth player, you must have ***Borderlands*** at any cost. If you're a more conventional wargamer, you'll still find it exceptionally fun and challenging, though the price is a bit stiff.

–Allen Varney

BY THE SWORD (The Legionnaire); $9. Designed by Chris Bell and R. Oka. 12-page 8½" x 11" rulebook, 11" x 17" flow chart, and 221 die-cut counters. Two or more players; playing time 2-6 hours. Published 1981.

The preface states that these rules are derived from a late Dark Ages poem by a Nordic ruler named Bendigeid. The poem describes a battle, which the discerning designers realized was a wargame, complete with rules. They say they translated and modified it for the modern gamer. This framing device is both spurious and unnecessary. The game is a compilation of ideas from WRG's Ancients rules, GDW's System 7 Napoleonics, and sundry FRP games. Armies of die-cut counters are placed on a table, orders written for the units, charges declared, morale tested, units moved, melee and archery factored, and results recorded. All of this is regulated by eight flow charts which contain all the basic information needed to play. It is a mass-action fantasy miniatures game without the need for lead figures. Provided are fantasy medieval Europeans, Moslems, and Mongols, plus orcs, elves, centaurs, lizard warriors, and more. The game can be played for a battle, a campaign, or can be adapted to extend and FRP adventure.

The flow charts work well as a means of getting the novice into playing without long hours of rules study. There is a plentiful counter mix, ensuring variety without overly complicating things. A campaign section included shows how to increase the abilities of heroes and wizards. Magic is important, but does not dominate the battlefield. Players must understand a great deal about the rules before they can play their best, but that's true for most games. The writing is understandable, and the flow charts get you through the initial information overload.

Although a Norse origin is claimed, nothing in the rules remotely resembles the Viking world. The authors keep making references to Bendigeid, which only take up space and distract the mind. They don't need him. There are some typos, but not crucial. The flow charts are printed on both sides of a large, awkward piece of paper, which requires two hands and skill to handle during the heat of battle. This fantasy world may violate your sense of what is "proper" in that orcs ride horses, Amazons ride tigers, chariots are pulled by small dinosaurs, etc.

You can use these rules as is, or with a bit of adjusting, you can fit them into whatever fantasy or ancients game you like. They could easily be used with 15 mm castings for those who already have such armies. If you would like to include large battles in your FRP world and don't mind learning a fairly complex new game system, look at this title. If you are not interested in large battles, or don't want to learn any involved rules, this is not for you. I recommend that anyone interested in fantasy should at least look this game over. It's not perfect, but a great deal of work has gone into it.

–Fred Askew

SHOOTOUT AT THE SALOON (Nova); $16.95. Designed by Mike Vitale and Joe Angiolillo. Two 425-page flipbooks, eight sheets of reference tables, and a bookshelf storage box. Two-player game, multiplayer and team play is possible using bookmarkers; playing time 10-30 minutes. Published 1982 as first in ***Bounty Hunter*** series.

SHOOTOUT AT THE SALOON is a flipbook game in which players choose to be either an outlaw or a lawman for an old-fashioned man-to-man gunfight. As they wander around the saloon, the flipbooks show the players a view of what they can see as well as a list of actions (turning, walking, or aiming) they can choose in their present circumstances. Each choice refers the player to a new page with a change in viewpoint appropriate to the action. Each player then calls out the page he finds himself on. If his opponent has stepped into view, the number called out by the other player will be found somewhere in the margins of his view, referring him to another page where his opponent will be included in the view. Combat resolution varies from simple (Basic Game) to fairly complex (Advanced Game) guessing games using silhouettes.

The views are well-drawn and the pages are bigger than ***Ace of Aces***. The rules for campaigning are more complete. The Advanced Game silhouette system has been well thought through and improves the concept in realism as well as in games theory. In addition, it is obvious that provisions have been made to allow easy expansion with other books in the ***Bounty Hunter*** series (presumably adding more buildings besides the saloon).

Unfortunately, page-size, campaigning, and combat resolution had nothing to do with why

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flipbooks became so popular with the *Ace of Aces* system. And no one is going to buy an expensive series of *Bounty Hunter* releases if each one by itself is a dull game. (I suspect that it would take four or five more "building" releases to give this game the replay value of AoA.) AoA used the flipbooks to simulate relative motion; SATS uses them for what is essentially hidden movement. And it still suffers from all the problems of most other unrefereed hidden-movement systems. Even if players do not "cheat" by memorizing certain key numbers in their opponents' books, some strategies (like hiding out in ambush) will be fairly obvious to any halfway aware player (who can hardly avoid noticing that his opponent keeps calling out the same number). AoA was a brilliant idea well executed; SATS is a dull idea well executed. The result is a dull game.

I recommend the game only to those so enamored with the idea of seeing what their character sees that they have to have every flipbook that comes out, and to those so anxious to shell out $80+ for the whole series that they must spend the first $17 right now.

–David McCorkhill

TITAN (Avalon Hill); $16. Designed by Jason B. McAllister and David A. Trampier. Hard boxed, bookshelf game with 16" x 23" masterboard (mounted game mapboard), 12-page 8½" x 11" rulebook, 621 die-cut color counters, 6 battleland cards, and four 6-sided dice. For two to six players; games can range from 2-12 hours. Published 1982.

TITAN is a fantasy wargame where each player moves, raises troops of monsters, and engages in combat with his opponents, trying to destroy everyone else's Titan while saving his own. Movement takes place on the masterboard. Directions of travel are regulated by easy-to-identify borders. As players move throughout the land, their legions of monsters recruit more monsters, split into new legions, and fight enemy legions to the death. Each player has only one Titan; if it dies, he's out of the game. As the player's legions gain experience, the player's Titan increases in power, giving him more abilities and making him harder to kill.

TITAN is a fairly simple wargame (AH complexity rating: 4). The masterboard is made of an ingenious matrix of triangles. Monsters are recruited on the basis of terrain type and the class of monsters that are doing the recruiting. For instance, a Colossus wouldn't want to be bothered by a few measly ogres, but would listen to two giants. Monster stats are simple. They each have a power rating which determines the numbers of attacks they can make a turn, and how much damage they can take before dying. They also have a skill factor which tells how fast they can move on a battleland, and how tough they are to hit or how proficient they are at dealing damage out. Once legions encounter one another on the masterboard, they move to battlelands (terrain enlargements of masterboard triangles) where they conduct combat. The victor receives victory points equal to the power-times-skill factor of the monsters that he killed. As a player's score increases, so does his Titan's power factor. He also may receive angels or archangels to aid him in his fights.

TITAN's rules seem a bit longer than they should be. They tend to repeat certain facts and can be somewhat confusing. Players will probably have to play a few games before the rules come automatically.

TITAN is a refreshing change from involved FRP games. For those of you who haven't tried a fantasy game, TITAN is a good one to start out with.

–Paul Manz

(Editor's Note: This is a rerelease of the 1980 game of the same name, then published by the authors. The review [TSG 33] of the previous edition reflected many of the same opinions as this one. –AA)

YSGARTH RULE SYSTEM (Ragnarok Enterprises); $10.00. Designed by David Nalle. Six 8½" by 5½" offset typescript booklets, 168 pages, c. 130,000 words. Second revised edition (orange cover) published 1982.

If you are looking for a FRPG which takes account of a great many factors in character generation, and includes a tremendous variety of skills, all in a logical and consistent manner, you must look into YSGARTH RULE SYSTEM (YRS). If you're looking for a font of sound advice about world-building and gamesmastering, look at YRS. But if you're looking for a simple FRPG, or one to start GMing with, look elsewhere.

Generation of 12 characteristics divided into physical, mental, and social groups is largely a matter of choice, not chance. Characteristics determine secondary characteristics such as attack and defense ratings, saving throws (in conjunction with level), skill learning points, hit points, fatigue points, etc. Five warrior classes, two priestly classes, and 15 magic-using classes are available; several may easily be combined. Anyone can learn any skill, but specialization has advantages. Experience level is derived from the *D&D* system. Combat includes fatigue, hit

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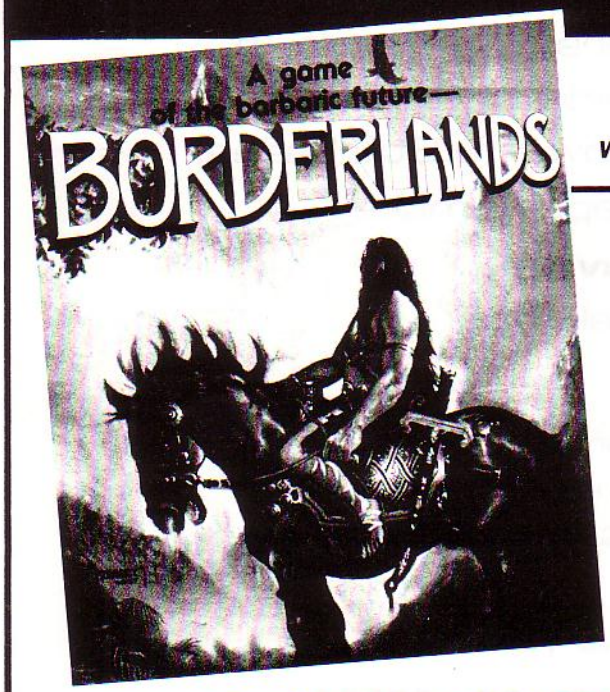

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location, armor deflection *and* absorption of damage points. Magic use allows for spell failure, fatigue, mana use, targeting, saving throws, and enhancement of spell effects. This is also the only system I know in which magicians can duel for more than a few rounds without result.

There is a great mass of information here, logically organized and well written. Most of the rules deal with characters and with role-playing; lists of monsters and magic items are confined to the last book, which also includes an introductory scenario.

Sometimes the great mass of abbreviations and values can be confusing. The typescript text is fairly small, with occasional breakdowns in syntax or typing, but YRS is a professional publication despite the lower-than-professional price.

This is the closest I've seen to a simulation FRPG, and there's plenty of potential for additions to other systems, if you prefer. At $10, YRS is one of the FRP bargains of this or any year.

–Lewis Pulsipher

SUPPLEMENTS

MERCHANT CLASS SHIPS (FASA); $12.50. Designed by Jordan Weisman, L. Ross Babcock III, and J. Andrew Keith; artwork by Mitch O'Connell and William J. Keith, Jr. Three double-sided 21½" x 33" deck plan sheets, two 16-page booklets, 112 die-cut counters, boxed. Published 1982.

For those ***Traveller*** players who like on-board actions, the folks at FASA have released another set of ship plans – MERCHANT CLASS SHIPS. And while past FASA deck plan sets have been good to excellent, MCS surpasses the best of these. The set fully depicts six different 1,000-ton merchant vessels: the *Star* class merchant line, *Trader* class provincial transport, *Triad* class merchant vessel, *Magnadon* class provincial merchant, *Seeker* class armored merchant, and *Iris* class armored packet. All six ships are mapped out down to minute interior detail – even showing tables, chairs, and bar-stools! – with each one featured on one side of the three plan sheets. Book 1 gives complete ***High Guard*** stats and deck-by-deck descriptions of the six ships, while Book 2 expands on the handling and use of cargo and passengers as outlined by ***Traveller*** Book 2, and outlines various scenario ideas for use with these and other merchant ships. The half-inch counters depict officers, crew, guard, passenger, and intruder figures for use on the plans, plus silhouettes of each ship for ***Mayday*** play.

Overall, the ships and information included in MERCHANT CLASS SHIPS should prove quite useful to ***Traveller*** players and referees, particularly those who enjoy trade and merchant-oriented adventure. All the graphics involved are quite excellent, and the guidelines on import and export tables, cargo restrictions, and passenger development are most helpful in fleshing out what can become mechanical actions on the part of the referee. The ships depicted herein are welcome departures from the standard ***Traveller*** free traders and subsidized merchants.

The problems evident in MCS are mostly minor – an excess of typos, for example. In some of the earlier print runs, the half-inch grid was omitted from half of the sheet of the *Seeker* class merchant, but anyone with such a problem may return the sheet to FASA for a corrected version. The main problem with the set is the box: It's so thin that placing any weight at all on it will crush it.

For the merchant-minded ***Traveller***, MERCHANT CLASS SHIPS is a worthwhile investment, and, with the minor exception of the box weight, I can give it my highest recommendation.

–William A. Barton

RESCUE ON GALATEA (FASA); $6. Designed by Mark Lawrence. Approved for ***Traveller***. 6" x 9" 44-page booklet. 11" x 17" map insert. For 4-6 players; playing time indefinite. Published 1982.

With RESCUE ON GALATEA, FASA brings a new team to its approved-for-***Traveller*** adventure series: designer Mark Lawrence and illustrator Mitch O'Connell, who present a mercenary-type adventure situation on an alien world in the Inverness subsector of the Far Frontiers. The mission is to rescue the son of the chairman of the board of Cohain Futures, the largest corporation in the sector, whose ship seems to have crashed on Galatea, an uninhabited worlds of ocean and island chains. Probes have picked up reports of unusual activities on the world, which may indicate foul play. The player-characters and several able NPCs receive the assignment, conveyed by the mysterious Omnipax (head of security for the Church of the Future Man), to investigate and bring back young Cohaine. The rescue is complicated by the possibility that a rival corporation may be using the world for secret weapon testing and, as the players learn soon after landing, by the presence of a sentient native race, the lizard-like Jessa. Included in the adventure are stats and descriptions for player-characters and NPCs (including

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Jessa), information on the geology, meteorology, and fauna of Galatea, encounter tables, library data, and even a variation on the Book 4 Abstract Combat System to cover air-to-air battles between forces and fleets of dirigibles and biplanes.

RESCUE has several interesting points to it, one of which is the aforementioned air-to-air variation to the Abstract Combat System. Though designed for battles between the low-tech air vehicles possessed by the Jessa, it could easily be adapted to other types of air battles. The adventure does much to further fill in the background of the corporations, organizations, etc., of the Far Frontiers, presenting the first look at one of its religions, the quasi-commercial Church of the Future Man. Lawrence also presents another interesting alien race in the Jessa and their dirigible culture.

Unfortunately, there are problems in RESCUE beyond the usual typos. The real problem is that the adventure seems incomplete in places – as though vital information (or at least *helpful* info) had been hastily overlooked. This seems odd since the adventure itself, including several full-page illustrations, is barely 42 pages long (the last page consisting of ads for other FASA products) – FASA's shortest adventure thus far. Even with the maps insert, some useful maps have been omitted; a planetary map showing the landing site would be quite useful in orienting the players on the travel section, and there *was* room for it. With no such map, and consequently no distance-by-hex scale, a section on the weather table noting visibility by hex becomes incomprehensible. Another omission is that the Bosaki, mentioned in the library data as an important alien race in the sector, are not so much as described. And, oddly, an important denouement to the adventure takes place off-stage entirely, leaving the players completely uninvolved.

Despite these curious omissions, especially strange in the light of past FASA adventures, RESCUE ON GALATEA has much to recommend it and could be a satisfying adventure if the referee doesn't mind tinkering with it more than is usually necessary with FASA fare. And even so, it is still superior to most items coming out of FASA's competitors in the licensed *Traveller* field.

– William A. Barton

COMPUTER GAMES

THE ETERNAL CURSE: SwordThrust 6 (CE Software); $?. Designed by Donald Brown. For a 48K Apple with Applesoft, one disk with DOS 3.3. Requires SwordThrust Master Disk (sold separately). For one player. Released 1982.

THE ETERNAL CURSE is the sixth ***SwordThrust*** adventure; these are text-only adventure games. This one has guards to fight (or evade), a castle to explore, and puzzles to solve; this is a thinking adventure.

The castle of Baron Tyme is small, but fairly rich in details and special features. Unlike most ***SwordThrust*** adventures, one is not forced to send in clone after clone until the adventure is solved; characters can leave to recover, then return stronger and more skillful to probe deeper into the mysteries of the castle. However, the program's monsters (and treasures) will have been replaced upon a character's return.

The only major fault (a matter of divided opinion) is a programming error that restores all lost fatigue upon entering a new room. This allows abuse of spells and develops fatigue capacity at an excessive rate. Also, as with most adventure programs, once the mysteries have been solved the fun is reduced for subsequent plays. However, as a character-building scenario, this one will continue to receive use.

THE ETERNAL CURSE is an excellent adventure program, ideal for building up characters for other ***SwordThrust*** adventures. It is also good fun on its own.

– Norman Banduch

TELENGARD (Avalon Hill/Microcomputer Games); $28. Designed by Orion Software. Boxed computer game for 48K Apple II, TRS-80 Models I and III. Comes with rulebook, disk, and conversion instructions for TRS-80. One player; playing time ten minutes to several hours. Published 1982.

TELENGARD is a hack, slash, or spell game with flat graphics in "real time" (actually timed delay). The computer generates a standard ***D&D***-type character, with armor, shield, and spells. One then names the character and either saves it on disk or sends it out into the dungeon. In the dungeon, the character either fights, evades, casts spells, or is dealt with by the various monsters. The goal is to rise in level, gathering treasure and magical items along the way.

TELENGARD is curiously addictive, and I spent many hours with it. However, it is severely flawed in its design and program execution.

The graphics are flat, with the character represented by "x," monsters by "#," and treasure/refuse by "$." The map is redrawn each time the character moves, and the drawing is maddeningly slow. The commands, while apparently logical, in practice cause many errors: I kept hitting E for east instead of D, and S for south instead of X. The information is presented so slowly that one hits the key for the next instruction too soon (and bypasses

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treasures) or too late (getting killed by monsters). One has to keep one's eye on the screen, and there is *no* pause control. The matching of monsters with character abilities is uneven: When a carefully-nurtured fourth-level fighter was ambushed at the bottom of the stairs from the beginner's tavern by a high-level dragon and instantly killed, I quit and began to look for ways to break into the program. There is also very little variety. The monsters on the 45th level are just meaner versions of those on the first.

TELENGARD could have been a good game, but is marred by poor programming and lack of polish. If you don't want to rewrite it yourself, wait for the second edition.

–Norman Banduch

ARCADE GAMES

FROGGER (Parker Brothers), $31.95. Cartridge and 8-page booklet. Cartridge for the Atari VCS. One or two players (one at a time); playing time usually under five minutes. Released 1982.

Parker Brothers' second cartridge for the VCS (the first being ***The Empire Strikes Back***) is the home version of Sega's popular arcade game. FROGGER is very easy to learn, but difficult to play. You control a frog who must get to his "home" dock by crossing a busy five-lane highway, and then over the logs and floating turtles of a river. Once you "dock" five frogs, the game starts over, but with more and faster cars, and more dangers in the river.

The first thing you'll notice when turning the game on is the carnival-like music, which sounds *exactly* like the arcade version. Once you press the game reset lever, you'll get a different chorus of the music. Once the music stops, you're ready to play. The graphics in the arcade FROGGER are high-resolution, but Parker Brothers did a pretty good job of translating them to the Atari. The screen is a good likeness of the arcade version, with all major features reproduced.

The worst part of the game is having to go through the music every time you hit reset, complete a board, or get killed. This is annoying to veteran players who want to get right to the action. The music does not run throughout the game, as it does in the arcade game. Some of the subtler aspects of the game are missing. When you get into a row of objects, they blink similar to Atari's Pac-Man monsters. The instruction manual is a little too cute, though it does explain everything well.

All in all, if you liked the arcade version, this should save you a lot of quarters. The price is in line with most cartridges. It also proves that Atari isn't the only one making home versions of the major arcade games for the VCS.

–Ed Driscoll

KING KONG (Tigervision); $29.95. Designed by Karl T. Olinger. Cartridge for the Atari VCS. Includes one cartridge and instruction folder. One or two players (taking turns); playing time usually under five minutes. Released 1982.

This game, from another independent VCS software supplier, is clearly a ***Donkey Kong*** rip-off. The plot is the same: Rescue the girl from King Kong by climbing up ladders and jumping over obstacles. Anybody who's ever played ***Donkey Kong*** will pick this game up fast, even though a few things have been changed. Bombs replace barrels. (Shades of ***Kaboom!***) The board only has one level, but it is varied enough to still be a challenge.

The graphics of the jump-man, girl, and bombs are nice. The man moves his arms and legs while walking, and a variety of jumps can be executed by the skilled player, including back jumps, run jumps, and timing jumps. The girl waves her arms back and forth in panic. The bombs all have lit fuses that flicker. An excellent idea was the inclusion of "magic bombs" that can be jumped over for big points, and raise you a level higher. Once you complete a board, it starts over with faster bombs. They do move fast, too. This game can be a real challenge. There are enough game variations to satisfy the veteran and rookie player. When you lose a man, the VCS plays a couple of bars from Taps.

The Gorilla is pretty pathetic. He is out of proportion, and doesn't do anything once he climbs the building. In fact, if you get a level below him, he will switch position to the bottom of the screen. The building could have been more realistic.

Overall, it's a fun-to-play game, with some good graphics. Not bad for a first cartridge!

– Ed Driscoll

RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX (Imagic); $29.95. Designed by Bob Smith. Cartridge for the Atari. Includes cartridge and 14-page instruction book. One player; three variations; playing time 15 minutes to two hours. Published 1982.

In RIDDLE OF THE SHPINX, the player becomes Prince of Egypt and travels back in time to release the land from a vile curse. To do so he must journey through the Valley of the Kings and offer a gift to the sun god at the Temple of Ra. The prince begins with a sling to toss stones and (depending on variation) a shield or spade. Through the long trek there are four factors which the player must monitor:

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RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX is by far the most complicated and fascinating game yet produced for the Atari system. There are advanced home computer games with less going for them. To be able to control all the actions the player uses the black-and-white/color switch, both difficulty switches, and both joysticks! The graphics and sound are quite nice. The items to be carried around are in keeping with Egyptian motifs and serve functional uses which are logically consistent. Particular temples demand specific offerings, and the game is a combination treasure hunt and guessing game to find the right one.

The only negative point is that determining the right objects to use is almost too easy with the clues given in the instructions. The game is so remarkably detailed and complicated it could provide even more enjoyment if this information had been better hidden.

A capsule review hardly gives enough room to praise this cartridge enough. It is a masterful blend of strategy and arcade gaming in a home cartridge. Take this one home.

–Richard A. Edwards

VENTURE (Coleco); $29.95. Cartridge for the Atari. Cartridge and 8-page rulebook. One player; playing time usually under five minutes. Released 1982.

Like its coin-op namesake, VENTURE involves maneuvering an explorer (Winky) through a maze and into rooms, which expand to fill the screen, and which are full of monsters guarding a treasure. Winky's job is to grab the treasure and then shoot the monsters with his unlimited supply of arrows. If the monsters are shot first, no points are scored. Hallmonsters, which cannot be shot, wander between the rooms and also appear within a room if Winky lingers too long (approximately 10 seconds). They move very fast and generally catch Winky if he's not near a door. If our hero does not capture the treasure he can re-enter the room to find all the monsters therein reincarnated, but if he escapes with the treasure, that room is forever sealed to him. There are two different boards, the pink for odd-numbered levels, and blue for even-numbered ones. The four rooms on the pink board have moving walls, goblins, snakes, and skeletons, and the blue board has spiders, two-headed monsters, dragons, and the especially difficult trolls. As Winky cleans out the rooms on each board, he gets to a deeper level and moves faster, and has to deal with faster monsters. Scores also improve: 200 per first-level treasure and 100 per monster, as opposed to 1000 and 500 respectively at fifth. Changing the difficulty switches makes it possible for the player to start at any of the first four levels. There are four Winkies and never any bonus ones.

The graphics on the program are very good. Winky is a smily face and the various monsters are recognizable. The game is easy enough on the first two levels for my seven-year-old to enjoy it, and challenging enough at speed for the teenagers. Again, like the coin-op game, the shooting and moving require practice to master.

It's a pity that the small program doesn't allow the sound effects of the big arcade game. I really liked snake-charming music with the serpents or "Dem Bones" with skeletons. Also Winky continues to smile when he's been killed, which hardly seems right. It seems to take a long time to change levels. The snakes have unexpected areas of influence and can kill Winky without even touching him. Sometimes the skeleton dust reanimates when a Hallmonster appears and can surprise Winky if he's trying to dodge around. The Hallmonsters also have the nasty habit of scrolling around and sneaking up on our hero from the rear.

These are minor complaints, though. I wish the designer were credited. He deserves it. The cartridge is a lot of fun and should remain one of our favorites for years. I recommend it.

–Jan Yarnot

PLAY AIDS

THE FANTASY TRIP CHARACTER RECORD SHEETS (Fantasimulations Associates, P.O. Box 5541, Evansville, IN 47715); $3.95. Thirty 8½" x 11" backprinted sheets, bagged. Approved for use with TFT. Published 1982.

A new company, Fantasimulations Associates, enters the market with some of the first non-Metagaming TFT play aids available – THE FANTASY TRIP CHARACTER RECORD SHEETS. Fantasimulation's sheets are much nicer than those currently provided with the game, with each section blocked off from the rest and clearly labelled so that information can be found in an instant. Certain sections, such as those for ST, DX, adjDX, IQ, MA, adjMA, and Ready Weapon and Hits, are labelled in larger, eye-catching letters for easier reference. Other boxes, aside from obvious listings, allow for keeping separate track of the number of hits absorbed and the individual adjDX of each type of protection a character has – armor, shield,

and special (backpack, Warrior talent, etc.) – or provide smaller individual boxes to cross off strength points loss (two separate series – one for damage loss and one for fatigue). Also listed, in the section for recording talents, spells, powers, and languages, are the automatically functioning skills – literacy, naturalist, alertness, recognize value, architect, sex appeal, and expert naturalist – so that the player can merely circle which ones he has, for a quick reminder in the appropriate situation.

The handiest addition to these character sheets are found on the back side – front and back silhouettes of a humanoid character with spaces for writing in exactly what is being carried where – left and right hand, arm, shoulder, boot, chest, or belt. Also provided is a space for ready weapon and outlines of the three types of shield – small, large, and tower (spike counting as small in this case) – to be drawn in, and an outline for a backpack and contents as well.

These sheets have only a few minor problems. If you're playing a non-humanoid shaped character – a centaur, for example – the silhouettes won't be of much use to you; ditto for things carried in a saddlebag, etc., if you're on horseback. And the sheets are printed in what appears to be non-reproducing blue ink, which means if you run out, you'll have to buy more unless you have access to a high-grade copier which will print this shade of blue (as was no doubt intended anyway, as there is no "permission to copy for personal use" notice on the sheets).

Of course, one does not need elaborate record sheets to record characters for TFT. Simple index cards will do. If you prefer to use such sheets, though, you should find these quite useful.

– William A. Barton

MINIATURES

SIEGE EQUIPMENT (Rafm Miniatures); 12 25mm lead kits, ranging from $4 to $12 apiece. Sculpted by Bill Schwartz. Most sets include assembly instructions. Released 1982.

No collection of miniatures is complete without at least one piece of siege equipment . . . and Rafm's new line is the last word for 25mm castle-conquering. From ordinary catapults and ballistas to obscure items like the crow and fire raiser, this series has everything a modern Alexander could ask for.

Sculpting quality is excellent (down to the varied wood grain on the beams and the irregularity of the bolt-heads holding them together); casting is also good. There are sprues to be trimmed off, but no excess flash. These pieces deserve the best paint job you can give them; they look *real.*

A couple of my sets (the Crow especially) required some gentle bending before they could be properly assembled – probably the result of too-hasty removal from the mold. My only other negative comment is on the crew figures – there are none! True, a Roman engineer won't do much for the buyer who has a fantasy army – or vice versa – but it's far easier to turn a centurion into an orc than it is to modify an ordinary figure from an infantryman into a ladder-climber or battering-ram pusher.

On the whole, though, this is an attractive and authentic line. I recommend it without reservation to both fantasy and historical miniaturists. A siege is a siege, and here's what you need to win it.

–Steve Jackson

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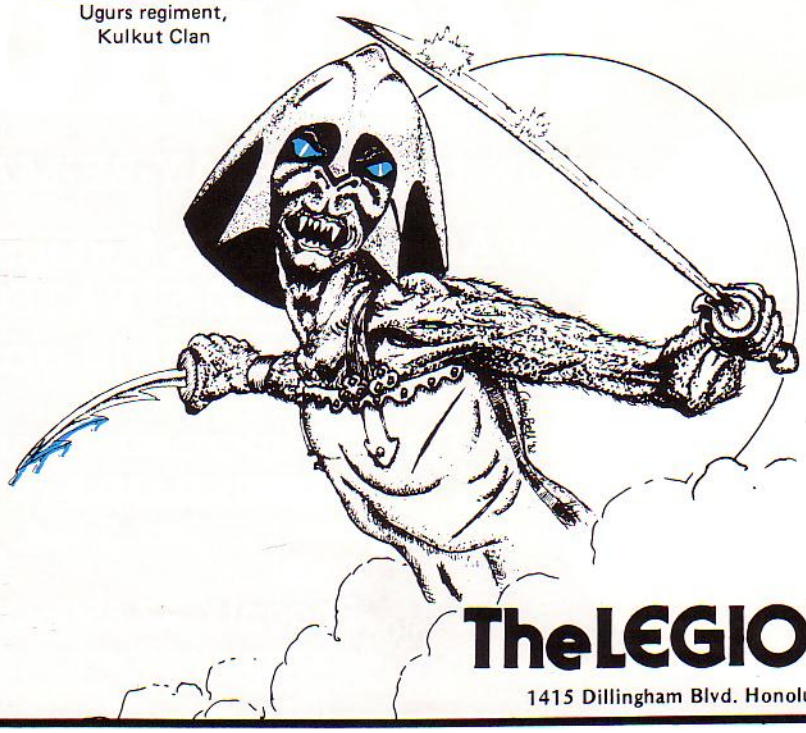

Thras, the sun god, emblem of the Honna Kor

The Empire of Honna

As the first in a continuing series of supplementary counter set for **BY THE SWORD**, we will soon be bringing out the troops of the Empire of Honna. The Empire is one of the most powerful hegemonies in the fantasy world which will gradually unfold in future sets. Most units will have unique and interesting aspects; consider the **Honna Kor**, the elite, fanatical soldier monks of the cult of Thras, the Sun God. Or the **Thi-pher-thil**, light cavalry allied to the Empire – are they human, or not? Certainly they have unusual abilities. There is a wide range of units available on these counter sheets, from levies to elite. From dwarves to super-beasts, all of them significant additions to the **BY THE SWORD** system.

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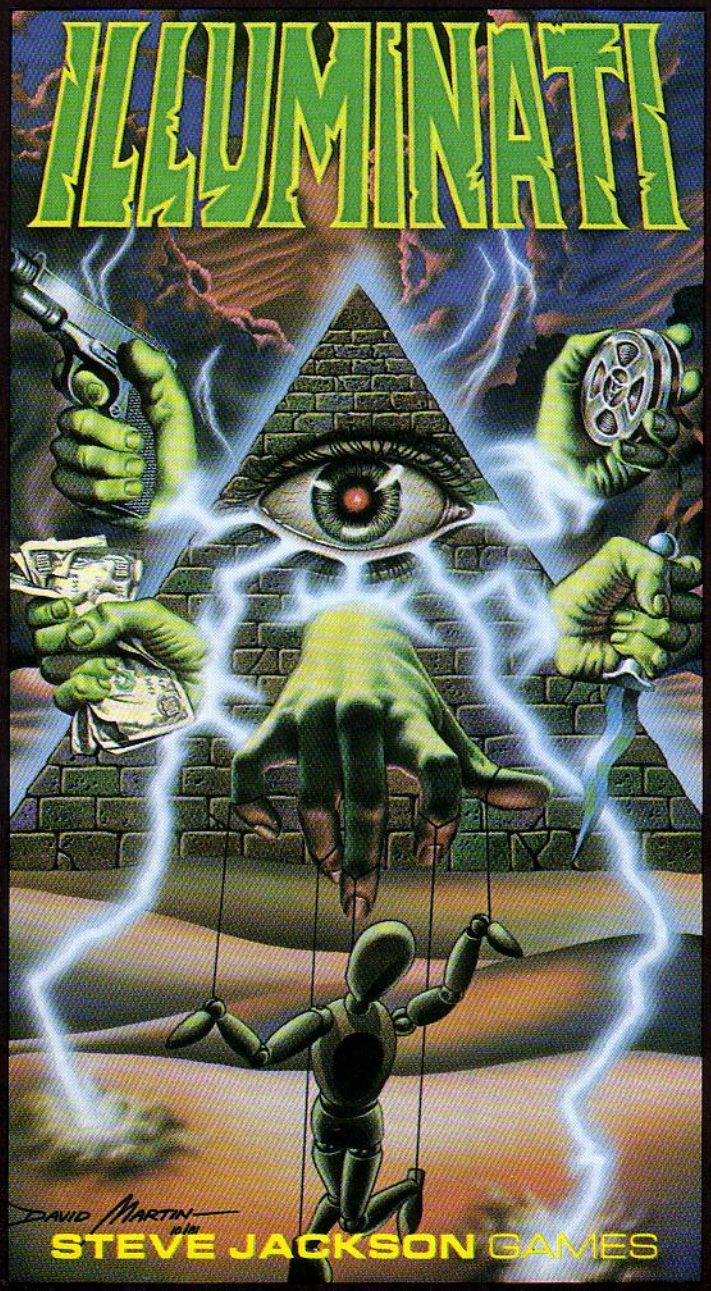

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Letters

The new slick format looks good, but a little of the "funny" feel and look of the magazine has gone. Hopefully, the improved art and layout will make up for this! The color art on page two was a bit garish; I hope it isn't representative of what you'll be doing.

The Splat Gun article was nicely detailed and useful, but – three pages on one weapon? Ironmongery and firepower are fascinating to many but should be of secondary importance to *role-playing*! With a little less detail, Mr. Barton could have put a scenario about the weapon in the space saved – the plans for the gun would be a prime target for unsavory types.

The editing and production of *Unnight* were well done – thank you! Some of the changes were a wee bit puzzling, though, and clash with the text in places. Stuzak, changed to a white dwarf, would have a special type of "SO." The enlarged (and hollowed?) Orb would cast more light than previously noted (on the order of 150 luna-shines). Eclipses should happen once a *year*, as noted on page 18. Anyway – a very good job, and thanks to all who added to/played with my ms.

Sigh! No Murphy's Rules, or contest results, or even a cartoon. Don't let the advertising squeeze the fun out of TSG!

Illuminati is one *nifty* game. It's the kind of game that gets played *a lot* and ends up on *Games'* 100 list. ***Nuclear War***, move over! Now if only I can *win* a game!

Stefan Jones
Locust Valley, NY

Thanks for the words, and for the enclosed errata; they'll probably show up in a Game Master in the near future. To answer some of your questions:

The page two art was indeed atypical. It was the first time Denis had ever attempted full-color mechanical separations, so it was a learning experience for him; plus, the printers managed to shoot it incorrectly, resulting in some last-minute changes. Check out last issue's page two art to see if we've improved.

The Splat Gun was originally the centerpiece of an enormous article Bill Barton wrote over a year ago, the "Tools for Terrorists" piece published in issue 49. We're still awaiting reader reactions on "Splat Gun."

Most of the changes in Unnight *came as a result of recommendations of two playtesters/technical assistants, Andy McWilliam (a University of Texas graduate student majoring in astronomy) and Jeff Jacobson (a U.T. engineering science major). They explained to TSG's astronomically-ignorant editor that Unnight was an example of the three-body problem, an astronomical oddity which has still not been resolved by astronomers, and that altering Orb into what was essentially a moon would greatly reduce complications. How much light Orb reflects, even in its enlarged size, is also a function of its reflectiveness (which we can assume to have diminished from the first draft). The eclipses were changed to once a day simply because, in my opinion, it added a little bit of flair and dramatic appeal to the scenario (the error from pages 18 to 19 on the eclipse frequency was also mine, but I won't comment on that, since I'm supposed to edit that sort of remark* out *of this magazine). Glad you liked the overall product, though.*

Check out "Where We're Going" this issue for news on Murphy's and contests.

–AA

After reading 'Contest Results: Magic in ***Car Wars***' I would like to suggest a new contest – predicting what games and supplements SJG will next spin off from their present line.

My entry in this new contest is: *The Yellow Brick Road Was Never Like This Before*, which will detail the adventures of all the cars, pedestrians etc. sent from ***Car Wars*** to Oz by the 'Tornado' spell.

Mary Ezzell
Dragon Tree Press

Listen – even with a Killer RV or a Dempsey, *I wouldn't want to mess around with Glinda the Good. Count me out.*

–AA

All of us at Schubel & Son thank you for publishing the recent comparison review of ***Heroic Fantasy*** and ***Catacombs of Chaos***. We deeply appreciate your coverage of the play-by-mail field.

To Mr. Armintrout: Thank you for your careful and thoughtful review. We appreciate your professional approach and we listen. We already have available a completely updated rule book. Thank you for pointing out this shortcoming.

To Flying Buffalo Inc.: Well, looks like you did us one better on this one. Congratulations on a nice piece of work, we hope you have all the success you had with ***StarWeb*** with ***Heroic Fantasy*** as well.

And to all you readers and especially the play-by-mail gamers: Even though Mr. Armintrout preferred ***Heroic Fantasy*** to ***Catacombs of Chaos***, we intend to keep learning from our weaknesses, gaining solace from our strength, and most of all, we will keep on trying to produce great play-by-mail games. We have at least three new entries coming out in 1983. Maybe next time, FBI. Thank you.

George V. Schubel
Manager, Schubel & Son

At any rate, Bill Armintrout said that "both games are significant advances in computer-moderated fantasy role-playing play-by-mail games," and a lot of his criticisms of ***Catacombs of Chaos*** *centered on the rulebook. I'll make you a deal: If you decide to send us a revised rulebook, we'll commission a capsule review on it, to point out the changes.*

–AA

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